WALT DISNEY/TOUCHSTONE PICTURES

Type of Material:	Screenplay	**Title:**	SAVING PRIVATE RYAN
Number of Pages:	116	**Author:**	RODAT, ROBERT
Publisher/Year:	.		
		Draft:	
Submitted by:	MAYBANK, BAYARD	**Circa:**	1944
		Location:	Occupied France
Submitted to:	ROS, JORDI	**Genre:**	ACTION/DRAMA
		Sub-Genre:	WAR
Analyst:	MACLEOD, DON		
Coverage Date:	May 13, 1996	**Elements:**	

LOG LINE:
A small squad of American soldiers venture into German held territory in order to rescue a young private. Inspired by a true story.

SYNOPSIS:
June 6, 1944. As American troops storm the beaches of Normandy, CAPTAIN JOHN MILLER, a hard-driving, tough-as-nails soldier who has won the Medal of Honor leads a daring assault against a German machine gun nest. At the very moment he and his men secure the beach, officials at the War Department in Washington learn that the Ryan family of Iowa have recently lost three sons, all of whom were killed in action. Realizing what a devastating impact this will have on the family, the brass issue an order stating that the fourth brother, PRIVATE JAMES RYAN, is to be given an honorary discharge and sent home. When it's learned that Ryan is serving with paratroopers who have dropped into the small town of Ramele, deep inside German held territory, Miller is ordered to retrieve him. Though less than pleased with this assignment, Miller nevertheless does as he is told and soon assembles a crack team of his best men. Much to his chagrin, however, his usual translator has been killed, so he is forced to enlist a bookish and hopelessly inexperienced Corporal by the name of UPHAM. With Upham fumbling along, Miller and his crew next commandeer a Jeep and head into the countryside. Surviving a mortar attack on the road to St. Mere, Miller radios in the location of a German artillery company, then orders his favorite sniper, a likeable country boy from Tennessee named JACKSON, to take out the German "spotter" who is causing the Allies so much trouble. Incredibly, Jackson manages to kill the spotter from a distance of 4200 yards. Ditching their Jeep, Miller and his men proceed on foot, then next attack a German machine gun nest. Sadly, their most optimistic comrade, WADE, is killed during the assault. Coldly putting Wade's death behind him, Miller refuses to let fear or grief dampen morale and orders his men to carry on. After spending a night in St. Mere, where the men while away the hours trying to guess what Miller did before the war -- Miller has never told anyone anything about his personal life -- the men proceed to Ramele. Passing a German tank company along the way, they make their way onto a bridge which is being held by Private Ryan and a handful of frightened paratroopers. When Miller passes on the bad news to Ryan and orders Ryan to accompany his squad back to the coast, however, Ryan flatly refuses. To leave now, he argues, would be to dishonor the memory of his fallen brothers. Moved, Miller and his men realize the kid is right, then decide to fight by his side. After launching a daring raid against a German position and making off with a heavy 88mm antitank gun, Miller and his men next fight off the first attack from the Germans. Sadly, Miller's trusted friend, SARGE, dies in the attack. Profoundly shaken, Miller opens up to his men and, for the first time, describes his home and family back in Pennsylvania. Come morning, he and his men brave a second attack. Though they manage to destroy four Tiger tanks, they pay a terrible price as Upham, Jackson and several paratroopers are killed. Just when it appears all is lost, however, they are saved by the arrival of a reinforcements. Determined to see their mission through, Miller and the surviving men in his squad escort Ryan back to the coast.

BUDGET High Medium Low

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Idea			▲	
Story Line			▲	
Characterization			▲	
Dialogue		▲		
Setting/Production Values				

Analyst: MACLEOD, DON
Coverage Date: May 13, 1996

Title: SAVING PRIVATE RYAN
Author: RODAT, ROBERT

COMMENT:

This is a professionally written but rather dated war story, the likes of which we haven't seen made in probably forty years. It's not often you find a script filled with such good old-fashioned heroism and larger-than-life derring-do. It's well done, for what it is, but it also seems jarringly out of synch with the times. Despite a few sobering moments in which key characters are killed, it still manages to glorify war and present it like some kind of grand adventure. The battle sequences are written with skill, but are fairly tame by today's standards. What's more, they're repetitious and predictable. By the time Miller and his men have survived their first few skirmishes, we've pretty much seen all there is to see. The same holds true for the characters, who are more than a little cliche. In fairness, some attempt is made to give them added dimension (before the climactic battle sequence, for example, Miller finally reveals a side to his character which is frightened and doubtful), but it's a case of too little, too late. These folks are quite simplistic, and never really amount to more than familiar cliches: the sassy New Yorker, the likeable country boy, the ever faithful Sergeant, the bookish egghead, etc.. The dialogue is often snappy, but aside from the profanity, it still sounds like an old-fashioned war flick. In short, the writing is competent, but anachronistic. It's a respectable script, but it's also a good thirty years too late.

Script: **PASS**
Writer: **PASS**

SAVING PRIVATE RYAN

by

ROBERT RODAT

January 17, 1996

SAVING PRIVATE RYAN

FADE IN:

CREDITS: White lettering over a black background. The THUNDEROUS SOUNDS OF A MASSIVE NAVAL BARRAGE are heard. The power is astonishing. It roars through the body, blows back the hair and rattles the ears.

FADE IN:

EXT. OMAHA BEACH - NORMANDY - DAWN

The ROAR OF NAVAL GUNS continues but now WE SEE THEM FIRING. Huge fifteen inch guns.

A SWARM OF LANDING CRAFT

Heads directly into a nightmare. MASSIVE EXPLOSIONS from German artillery shells and mined obstacles tear apart the beach. Hundreds of German machine guns, loaded with tracers, pour out a red snowstorm of bullets.

OFFSHORE

The greatest armada ever assembled by man. Five thousand ships and boats: destroyers, battleships, mine sweepers, troop carriers.

SUPERIMPOSITION:

OMAHA BEACH, NORMANDY
June 6, 1944
0600 HOURS

HUNDREDS OF LANDING CRAFT

Each holding thirty men, near the beaches.

THE CLIFFS

At the far end of the beach, a ninety-foot cliff. Topped by bunkers. Ringed by fortified machine gun nests. A clear line-of-fire down the entire beach.

TEN LANDING CRAFT

Make their way toward the base of the cliffs. Running a gauntlet of explosions.

SUPERIMPOSITION:

THE FOLLOWING IS BASED
ON A TRUE STORY

THE LEAD LANDING CRAFT

Plows through the waves.

THE CAMERA MOVES PAST THE FACES OF THE MEN

Boys. Most are eighteen or nineteen years old. Tough. Well-trained. Trying to block out the fury around them.

A DIRECT HIT ON A NEARBY LANDING CRAFT

A huge EXPLOSION of fuel, fire, metal and flesh.

THE LEAD LANDING CRAFT

The Motorman holds his course. Shells EXPLODE around them. FLAMING OIL BURNS on the water. CANNON FIRE SMASHES into the bow.

THE MOTORMAN IS RIPPED TO BITS

BLOOD AND FLESH shower the men behind him. The mate takes the controls.

A YOUNG SOLDER

His face covered with the remains of the motorman. Starts to lose it. Begins to shudder and weep. His name is DeLancey.

THE BOYS AROUND HIM

Do their best to stare straight ahead. But the fear infects them. It starts to spread.

A FIGURE

Pushes through the men. Puts himself in front of DeLancey.

The figure is CAPTAIN JOHN MILLER. Early thirties. By far the oldest man on the craft. Relaxed, battle-hardened, powerful, ignoring the hell around them. He smiles, puts a cigar in his mouth, strikes a match on the front of DeLancey's helmut and lights the cigar.

DeLancey tries to look away but Miller grips him by the jaw and forces him to lock eyes. Miller smiles. DeLancey is terrified.

DELANCEY
Captain, are we all gonna die?

MILLER
Hell no, two-thirds, tops.

DELANCEY
Oh, Jesus...

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MILLER
I want every one of you to look at the man on your left. Now look at the man on your right. Feel sorry for those two sons-of-bitches, they're going to get it, you're not going to get a scratch.

A few, including DeLancey, manage thin smiles. Miller releases his grip on DeLancey who moves his jaw as if to see if it's broken. Miller pats him on the cheek and moves on to the bow.

MILLER

Looks over the gunwale at THE HELL IN FRONT OF THEM.

PAN DOWN TO MILLER'S HAND

It quivers in fear. Miller glances around, sees that none of the men have noticed. He stares at his hand as if it belongs to someone else. It stops shaking. He turns his eyes back to the objective.

THE LEAD LANDING CRAFT HITS THE BEACH

The six surviving boats alongside.

EXPLOSIVE PROPELLED GRAPPLING HOOKS FIRE

From the landing crafts. Arc toward the top of the cliffs.

THE LEAD CRAFT RAMP GOES DOWN

A river of MACHINE GUN FIRE pours into the craft. A dozen men are INSTANTLY KILLED. Among them, DeLancey.

MILLER

Somehow survives. Jumps into the breakers.

MILLER
MOVE, GODDAMN IT! GO! GO! GO!

EXPLOSIONS EVERYWHERE

THE GERMANS

On the edge of the cliff. Rain down MACHINE GUN FIRE and GRENADES.

THE AMERICANS

Struggle through the surf. FIRING up as best they can. Making for the base of the cliffs.

INCENDIARY GRENADES, HURLED FROM ABOVE,

EXPLODE, SPREADING FIRE

MILLER

Ignores the EXPLOSIONS and BULLETS. Uses hand signals and curt orders.

MILLER
THERE! THERE! HOOKS THERE! FIRE SQUAD, THOSE ROCKS!

THE MEN

Obey instantly. Set the grappling hooks. Take position. Return fire.

THE SOUNDS OF BATTLE

Drown out most voices. Except the SCREAMS OF THE WOUNDED AND DYING.

THE MEN

Know what they have to do. Start up the ropes. Into the teeth of the German defenders.

MILLER

Back-straps his Thompson sub-machine gun. Starts climbing with the first group.

THE CLIFF FACE

The Americans swarm up the ropes. Taking turns firing up at the Germans.

MILLER SEES A STALLED CLIMBER

A soft-faced boy. Grabs him by the back of his collar. Roughly yanks him up. Nearly choking him. The boy climbs on.

HALF-WAY

An American private is HIT. FALLS, taking two others with him. All three land on the rocks below. Another way to die.

NEAR THE TOP

Less steep. They leave the ropes. Free climb, scrambling up the rocks.

MILLER

Joins half-a-dozen pinned down men. Others bottleneck behind them. Miller scans the route and the defenders.

Sees an open gap. Deadly. Beyond is a protective overhang. With a clear line to the top.

MILLER
That's the route.

Miller motions to six men huddled near him.

MILLER
Go!

THE SIX MEN

Take an instant to get ready. Then SCRAMBLE into the gap.

MILLER AND THE OTHERS

Do their best to cover them. POUR FIRE up at the Germans. Bad angle. No Germans are hit.

THE SIX MEN

Are CUT TO RIBBONS by MACHINE GUN FIRE. All KILLED. They fall to the rocks below.

SARGE, mid-twenties, experienced, Miller's right arm and best friend, dives into the rocks next to Miller.

SARGE
That's a goddamned shooting gallery, Captain.

MILLER
It's the only way.

MILLER

Turns to the next half-dozen men.

MILLER
YOU'RE NEXT!

THE SECOND SIX

Move to the head of the gap. Miller moves for a better angle against the machine guns. Calls to JACKSON, a tall, gangly Southern countryboy, sharp-shooter.

MILLER
JACKSON, PICK OFF A FEW OF THEM, WILL YOU?

JACKSON
(heavy Southern accent)
You betcha, Captain.

Miller signals others where to direct their cover fire. Turns to the Second Six.

MILLER
GO!

THE SECOND SIX

Take deep breaths. Head into the gap.

MILLER AND OTHERS BLAST SURPRESSING FIRE

JACKSON, NAILS a pair of Germans. MILLER CUTS DOWN two more. SARGE gets one. Not enough.

THE SECOND SIX

Are RAKED BY MACHINE GUNS. All are KILLED.

MILLER

Turns, looking for the next six. His eyes fall on Sarge and REIBEN who is a cynical, sharp, New Yorker. Reiben smiles.

REIBEN
(heavy Brooklyn accent)
Captain, can I put in for a transfer?

MILLER
Sure, meet me at the top, we'll start the paperwork.

THE THIRD SIX

Moves into place. Sarge and Miller exchange a look. They both see the madness of what they're doing.

MILLER AND THE OTHERS

OPEN UP on the Germans.

MILLER
GO!

SARGE

Rolls his eyes, takes a breath. Scrambles into the gap. The other five right behind.

IN THE GAP

BULLETS EVERYWHERE.

Three are HIT. Then another. POTATO MASHER GRENADES bounce down. EXPLODE below.

THE GERMAN MACHINE GUN swings toward Sarge and Reiben. Miller sees them about to get it...

MILLER STEPS OUT INTO THE OPEN.

A perfect target. Captain's bars glinting. FIRING. TRYING TO DRAW THE GERMAN FIRE.

THE GERMAN MACHINE GUNNER

SEES MILLER STANDING IN THE OPEN. Too much to pass up. He swings the machine gun away from Sarge and Reiben, toward Miller.

A ROW OF GERMAN BULLETS approaches Miller...he's an instant from death.

SARGE AND REIBEN DIVE

Under the overhang to safety.

MILLER DIVES BACK TO COVER, BARELY MAKES IT, HIS BOOTHEEL IS BLOWN OFF.

UNDER THE OVERHANG Sarge and Reiben untangle themselves.

REIBEN
I'll be Goddamned! I'm not dead!

Sarge hollars back to Miller.

SARGE
CAPTAIN, IF YOUR MOTHER SAW YOU DO THAT, SHE'D BE VERY UPSET!

MILLER
I THOUGHT YOU WERE MY MOTHER.

Quick smiles. MILLER AND HIS RANGERS lean out and FIRE. HIT more Germans.

SARGE AND REIBEN run up the path, under the overhang. Stop near the top. Pull pins on grenades. Count. Both throw long, arcing over the crest, perfectly aimed.

THE TWO GRENADES EXPLODE.

Putting out the two worst machine gun nests.

MILLER

Crosses the gap. His men follow.

AT THE CREST

The Americans swarm over the top. FIRING.

TWO DOZEN GERMANS FIRE BACK as they retreat.

Abandoning the perimeter defense of the bunkers. The Germans are CUT DOWN.

MILLER motions to WADE, a small, wide-eyed, demolition man who's struggling under the weight of half-a dozen satchel charges.

MILLER
Okay, Wade, your turn.

WADE
Captain, I love it when you say that.

Miller, Sarge, Reiben and Jackson cover Wade as he races to the first of three bunkers. Dodging bullets from inside. Wade tosses a SATCHEL CHARGE into a gun port. A HUGE, MUFFLED EXPLOSION, rocks the bunker.

MILLER AND SARGE

Survey the field.

SARGE
What the hell were you doing? Drawing fire!

MILLER
Worked, didn't it?

SARGE
You tryin' to get yourself killed?

MILLER
Don't need to, the Krauts got that covered.

Sarge shakes his head at Miller, then he looks over the cliff at the scores of men, their shattered, burning bodies covering the rocks and the beach below. He's clearly affected.

Miller coldly glances at the dead and wounded. Then he moves on, leading his surviving men toward the two remaining German bunkers. The SOUNDS OF BIG GUNS and MACHINE GUN FIRE surround him.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. -WAR DEPARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The SOUND OF CLATTERING MACHINE GUN FIRE SEGUES TO that of CLATTERING TYPEWRITERS. A huge government building stands in the heart of Washington, D.C.

SUPERIMPOSITION:

WAR DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.
JUNE 8, 1944

INT. COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE - WAR DEPT. - DAY

Very busy. A dozen, somber military clerks work behind desks, quickly and efficiently. No small talk.

A CLERK

Older than the others, sad-eyed, adds a sheet of paper to a large pile in his out-box.

CLOSE SHOT

An outgoing telegram. It reads: "We regret to inform you...killed in action...heroic service..." This is the paperwork of death.

THE CLERK

Pulls out a file. Reads. Finds something troubling. Quickly shuffles through some other papers. Finds what he's looking for. Rises from his desk and hurries out of the office.

INT. LIEUTENANT'S OFFICE - WAR DEPT. - DAY

Seen through a glass wall. The clerk speaks to a YOUNG LIEUTENANT who is visibly shaken by what he is being told. He motions to the clerk to follow and he strides out of the office with the clerk on his heels.

INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - WAR DEPT. - DAY

Again, seen through a glass wall. The Young Lieutenant speaks to a YOUNG CAPTAIN who, like the Lieutenant is clearly bothered by what he's being told. The Captain takes the papers from the Young Lieutenant and strides out.

INT. COLONEL'S OFFICE - WAR DEPT. - DAY

A busy office. Aides and secretaries scurry about. The walls and tables are covered with maps of Normandy and complex deployment charts. A ONE-ARMED COLONEL with a chest full of ribbons pours himself another cup of coffee. He clearly hasn't slept in a long time. The Young Captain, his staff officer, walks in.

YOUNG CAPTAIN
Colonel, I've got something you should know about.

ONE-ARMED COLONEL
Yes?

YOUNG CAPTAIN
Two brothers died in Normandy. One at Omaha Beach, the other at Utah. Last week in Guam a third brother was killed in action. All three telegrams went out this morning. Their mother in Iowa is getting all three telegrams this afternoon.

The life drains from the Colonel. Others in the room hear and freeze.

ONE-ARMED COLONEL
Oh, Jesus.

YOUNG CAPTAIN
There's more. There's a fourth brother. The youngest. He paracuted in with the Hundred-and-First Airborne the night before the invasion. He's on the front.

ONE-ARMED COLONEL
Is he alive?

YOUNG CAPTAIN
We don't know.

The Colonel regains his bearings. Stands and motions curtly to the Captain.

ONE-ARMED COLONEL
Come with me.

The Colonel strides from the room with the Captain on his heels. The aides and secretaries watch them go.

EXT. FARM ROAD - IOWA - DAY

A black car drives along a dirt road, a cloud of dust rising behind. Passing through an endless expanse of ripening corn.

EXT. RYAN FARM - IOWA - DAY

A white farmhouse. A barn. A stand of trees. Cornfields as far as the eye can see.

IN THE YARD

A tire swing. A bushel basket nailed to the barn over a dirt basketball court.

A PORCH SWING

Sits empty. Moves slightly.

ON THE GLASS OF THE FRONT DOOR

Four American flag decals. Each one, a man in service.

MARGARET RYAN

Steps out. Around sixty. Her face shows the lines of a life of hard work and motherhood. A good woman.

She wipes her hands on her apron and looks out across the fields. Far in the distance she sees the dust rising behind the black car.

She watches the car get closer, then sees it turn toward her house. She starts to grow uneasy.

As the black car approaches, her breath comes hard. She reaches out and steadies herself on the porch post.

The car pulls up to the house. She sees three men get out, one wearing a clerical collar. The first of her tears come.

INT. GENERAL MARSHALL'S OFFICE - WAR DEPARTMENT - DAY

Another busy office filled with aides and secretaries. GENERAL GEORGE MARSHALL, Army Chief of Staff, stands next to his conference table, reading the Ryan brothers' files. Half-a-dozen subordinates, among them the One-Armed Colonel and the Young Captain, wait. General Marshall puts down the file.

GENERAL MARSHALL
(softly)
Goddamn it.

ONE-ARMED COLONEL
All four of them were in the same company in the 29th Infantry but we split them up after the Sullivan brothers died on the Juneau.

GENERAL MARSHALL
Any contact with the fourth brother, James?

ONE-ARMED COLONEL
No, sir. He was dropped about thirty miles inland, near Ramelle. That's still deep behind German lines.

General Marshall hardens.

GENERAL MARSHALL
Well, if he's alive, we're going to send someone to get him the hell out of there.

That's just what the General's staff wanted to hear.

EXT. NORMANDY - CRATER FIELD - DAY

NEAR CONSTANT MORTAR EXPLOSIONS. HEAVY MACHINE GUN FIRE. Miller's Ranger company is pinned down by a superior force of German troops. The Americans hug the bottoms of the craters, FIRING BACK as best they can. BIG GUNS THUNDER in the distance.

SUPERIMPOSITION:

Normandy
1300 hours
June 9

MILLER

Trailed by a RADIOMAN, dashes through the fire and dives into a sludge-filled crater. He surfaces, sees Sarge and Reiben, and reels from a horrific smell. Their converstion is repeatedly broken by FIRING and DUCKING GERMAN FIRE.

MILLER
Jesus Christ! What the hell are we swimming in?

REIBEN
Shit, sir.

SARGE
Fertilizer, Captain, I think we're in a cranberry bog.

REIBEN
Out of the frying pan, into the fucking latrine.

MILLER
Look at the bright side, the Krauts sure as hell don't want to advance and hold this cesspool.

Miller barks to his RADIOMAN.

MILLER
Get Fire Control, we need some artillery...

RADIOMAN
Trying, sir.

MORE EXPLOSIONS. They all duck. Reiben's worried.

REIBEN
Sir, what if they send some other company into Caen ahead of us while we're pinned down here?

MILLER
Don't worry, we're the only Rangers this side of the Cotentin, we've got to be first into Caen.

SARGE
Who cares?

REIBEN
I care. Don't you know what Caen's famous for, Sarge?

SARGE
Frogs?

REIBEN
Lingerie.

SARGE
Yeah? So?

THE GERMAN FIRE diminishes for an instant. Miller, Sarge and Reiben immediately rise and POUR FIRE at the German positions. GERMAN MACHINE GUN FIRE RESPONDS and they duck down again.

REIBEN
So, you ever heard of employee discounts? My uncle sells shoes, gets twenty-five percent off everything in the line, got a closet filled with the best looking shoes you ever seen.

MORE MORTAR EXPLOSIONS.

REIBEN
Just picture some French number been spending all day, every day, making cream-colored, sheer-body negligees with gentle-lift silk cups and gathered empire waists, what the hell you think she wears at night?

MILLER
Reiben, how the hell do you know so much about lingerie?

REIBEN
Lingerie is my life, sir. My mother's got a shop in Brooklyn, I grew up in it, from the time I could crawl, we carry Caen lingerie, it's the best there is, it's all I been thinking about since the invasion.

Another pause in the German shelling. Reiben rises and BLASTS HIS B.A.R, then ducks as the GERMANS RETURN FIRE.

MILLER
There's a war on, good chance they're not still making lingerie in Caen.

REIBEN
Oh, Captain, they'll always make lingerie, it's one of the three basic needs of man -- food, shelter, silk teddies.

MILLER
Dream on, private.

REIBEN
Happy to, sir.

RADIOMAN
Captain, I've got Command, they want you back at H.Q., right way.

MILLER
Maybe the war's over.

A MORTAR SHELL EXPLODES VERY CLOSE. After the debris stops falling, Sarge and Reiben rise, spitting out sludge. Reiben looks dubiously at Miller.

REIBEN
I don't think so, Captain.

MILLER
(to Radioman)
Stay at it until you get fire control.
(to Sarge)
Keep 'em down, wait for the navy.

SARGE
Yes, sir.

Miller waits for a pause in the MORTAR BARRAGE, then scrambles out of the crater and takes off in a crouch-run.

EXT. NORMANDY - FIELD H.Q. - 19TH INFANTRY - DAY

Chaos. Under fire. INTERMITTANT MORTARS, SOME BIG GERMAN SHELLS and fairly close SMALL ARMS FIRE.

MILLER

Runs over the broken ground and makes it to the sandbagged H.Q. He stumbles down the make-shift stairs.

INT. H.Q. SANDBAGGED BUNKER - DAY

Sand and dirt falls with the closest of the EXPLOSIONS which continue throughout the scene. Miller salutes a Major.

MILLER
Miller, Company B, Second Rangers.

MAJOR
Go on in.

Miller goes deeper into the H.Q. bunker where he finds a dozen officers with as many aides, runners and radiomen. Very busy. A field map dominates the center of the small space.

The men in the room note Miller, a few nod to him respectfully. He's clearly someone special.

COLONEL SAM ANDERSON is in command, talking on a field-phone. He's about fifty, firm and steady, the calm at the eye of the storm. He sees Miller and motions for him to wait.

COLONEL ANDERSON
(into field-phone)
...I understand your problem, but if we don't get those tanks off-loaded by 0600, we're going to have an entire division up at Caen with its ass hanging out of its pants...

A LIEUTENANT steps up to Miller and hands him a sheet of paper.

LIEUTENANT
Captain, here's your company address list.

MILLER
My what?

LIEUTENANT
For letters to the families of your killed-in-action.

Miller hands the list back to the Lieutenant.

MILLER
Find a chaplain.

COLONEL ANDERSON
(into field-phone)
...alright, let me know when.

Anderson hangs up, speaks to an AIDE.

COLONEL ANDERSON
Have the Second and Third Regiments hold at St. Michel until we get those tanks.

AIDE
Yes, sir.

Colonel Anderson turns to Miller.

COLONEL ANDERSON
Report.

MILLER
Sector four is secured, we put out the last three German one-fifty-fives, found them about two miles in from Ponte du Hoc.

COLONEL ANDERSON
Resistance?

MILLER
A company, Wehrmacht, no artillery, we took twenty-three prisoners, turned them over to intelligence.

COLONEL ANDERSON
Casualties?

MILLER
Forty-four, twenty-one dead.

An instant of SILENCE, all hear, none look.

MILLER
They didn't want to give up those one-fifty-fives, sir.

COLONEL ANDERSON
It was a hard assignment, that's why you got it.

MILLER
Yes, sir.

COLONEL ANDERSON
Where are your men now?

MILLER
Pinned down, a mile east of here, waiting for some help from the navy guns.

COLONEL ANDERSON
I'm sending Simpson to take over for you, the division is going to Caen, you're not coming with us, I have something else for you.

MILLER
Sir?

COLONEL ANDERSON
There's a Private James Ryan who parachuted in with the Hundred-and-First near Ramelle. I want you to take a squad up there. If he's alive, bring him back to the beach for debarkation. Take whoever you need, you've got your pick of the company.

MILLER
A private, sir?

COLONEL ANDERSON
He's the last of four brothers, the other three were killed in action. This is straight from the Chief of Staff.

MILLER
But, sir...I...I...

COLONEL ANDERSON
Spit it out, Captain.

Miller hesitates, then:

MILLER
Respectfully, sir, sending men all the way up to Ramelle to save one private doesn't make a fucking, goddamned bit of sense.
(more)

MILLER (Cont'd)
(beat)
Sir.

The other officers freeze, listening without turning. Colonel Anderson glares at Miller.

COLONEL ANDERSON
You think just because you hold the Congressional Medal of Honor, you can say any damn thing you please to your superior officiers?

Miller considers the question, then smiles.

MILLER
Yes, sir, more or less.

Colonel Anderson looks as if he's about to bite Miller's head off, then he smiles, too.

COLONEL ANDERSON
Alright, I'll give you that. Continue.

MILLER
The numbers don't make sense, sir. His brothers are dead, that's too bad, but they're out of the equation. Sending men up there is bleeding heart crapola from three thousand miles away. One private is simply not worth a squad.

COLONEL ANDERSON
This one is. He's worth a lot more than that. Which is why I'm sending you, you're the best field officer there is.

Miller shrugs.

MILLER
Yes and no, sir, what about Morgan? Fine officer, regular church goer, writes poetry, he might like a mission like this.
(beat)
And he's taller than me.

Colonel Anderson listens with amused tolerance, but it's time to get back to business.

COLONEL ANDERSON
That's enough, Captain, you have your orders. Major Thomas will fill you in.

Miller knows when to back off. He salutes.

MILLER
Yes, sir.

Miller and Colonel Anderson exchange a private look.

COLONEL ANDERSON
Good luck, John.

MILLER
Thank you, sir.

Miller joins Major Thomas at one of the smaller map tables. Colonel Anderson watches Miller for an instant, then notices the other officers in the tent watching. A glare and they go back to work.

EXT. BATTLESHIP - DAY

A MASSIVE BARRAGE of fifteen-inch shells BLASTS from the deck of the enormous ship.

EXT. CRATER FIELD - CRANBERRY BOG - DAY

HUGE EXPLOSIONS. The big naval shells SLAM into the German position on the far side of the cranberry bog crater field.

IN THE CRATERS

Miller's Ranger company ducks and covers. The BARRAGE SUBSIDES. The Rangers rise, FIRING, leap-frogging from crater to crater, advancing against the remaining Germans who return SMALL ARMS FIRE.

MILLER

Crouch-runs and dives into a crater with Sarge.

MILLER
Put on your traveling shoes, Sarge, we're heading out.

SARGE
Caen?

MILLER
I wish. You and I are taking a squad up to Ramelle on a public relations mission.

SARGE
You? Leading a squad?

MILLER
Some private up there lost three brothers, got a ticket home.

SARGE
What about the company?

MILLER
Simpson.

SARGE
Simpson? Jesus Christ on a fucking pogo stick!,

MILLER
I want Reiben on B.A.R; Jackson with his sniper rifle; Beasley, demolition.

SARGE
Beasley's dead.

MILLER
Okay, Wade. Translators?

SARGE
Fresh out.

MILLER
What about Talbot?

SARGE
Twenty minutes ago.

MILLER
Damn, I'll go see if I can find another one. You get Reiben, Jackson and Wade, meet me at transport.

SARGE
Yes, sir.

They wait for a lull in the firing, then scramble out of the crater and crouch-run off in opposite directions.

EXT. TRANSPORT H.Q. - NINETEETH INFANTRY - DAY

Just in from the beaches. DISTANT ARTILLERY AND EXPLOSIONS. Nothing close. Dust. Confusion. Vehicles of every sort moving out. Tanks, half-tracks, troop trucks. In the middle of the mess, a cigar-chewing SUPPLY SERGEANT works at a make-shift desk made out of a crate. He yells at a PRIVATE.

SUPPLY SERGEANT
GET THOSE GODDAMNED HALF-TRACKS OUT OF THERE!

PRIVATE
They're blocked in!

SERGEANT
THEN UNBLOCK 'EM!

SARGE, REIBEN, JACKSON AND WADE

Wait nearby. Reiben is beside himself, pacing, muttering. The others are relaxed.

MILLER

Strides through the chaos, avoiding the passing vehicles. He sees his men and walks toward them. Reiben hurries up to Miller, pleading.

REIBEN
Please, sir, you can't take me to Ramelle, I gotta go to Caen, sir, please, I told you, they make Caen lingerie there, it's beautiful, it's the best there is, it's...oh, please, sir...

MILLER
Sorry, I need a B.A.R. man, you're the best.

REIBEN
(desperate)
No, I'm not, Kaback is, honest. Or what about Faulkner? Or that little guy with the glasses?

MILLER
Trust me, you're the best.

REIBEN
(whimpering)
But, sir...

Miller jerks his head for his men to follow and he strides off toward the Supply Sergeant's table. Sarge falls in next to Miller.

SARGE
You get a translator, Captain?

MILLER
I've got a line on one.

TRANSPORT OPERATIONS TABLE

Chaos. Vehicles THUNDERING by. The Supply Sergeant juggles runners and paperwork. Miller steps up to him.

MILLER
Sergeant, I need a truck.

SUPPLY SERGEANT
Sorry, sir, fresh out of trucks, how 'bout a '38 Ford Roadster, hard-top, red with black interior.

MILLER
White-walls?

SUPPLY SERGEANT
No white-walls, sir, there's war on.
(to the Private)
NOT THERE, YOU GODDAMNED IDIOT, OVER THERE!
(to Miller)
I can't help you, sir.

MILLER
A half-track, anything.

SUPPLY SERGEANT
Sorry, sir. Division is using everything on wheels to get up to Caen.
(notices Miller's shoulder patch)
How come you guys aren't going?

Miller ignores the question. He spies a jeep.

MILLER
What about that jeep?

SUPPLY SERGEANT
That's General Gavin's. His lap dog told me if anyone breathes on it, I'll get busted and if anyone so much as touches it with their little finger, I'll get court martialed. If you were to take it, they'd shoot me.

JACKSON
Cap'n, does that mean we got to walk all the way up to Ramelle?

SUPPLY SERGEANT
What's at Ramelle besides a lot of Germans.

MILLER
A paratrooper named Ryan. He's going home, if he's alive.

SUPPLY SERGEANT
Senator's son?

MILLER
No, three brothers of his were killed in action. Command wants him out of there.

The Supply Sergeant grunts as if punched in the belly.

SUPPLY SERGEANT
Damn...I got a couple brothers...

Miller looks at him, noting his reaction coldly. The Supply Sergeant shifts his eyes toward General Gavin's jeep.

EXT. ROAD LEADING FROM TRANSPORT - DAY

Miller and his men drive off, fast, in General Gavin's jeep. Sarge is at the wheel, weaving and bouncing through the bedlam of men and vehicles. Miller rides shotgun. Reiben, Jackson and Wade are crammed in the back.

THE SUPPLY SERGEANT

Watches them go. Behind him, GENERAL GAVIN, pure piss and vinegar, strides up, trailed by his huge staff. He looks around for his jeep, comes up empty.

GENERAL GAVIN
SERGEANT, WHERE THE HELL IS MY GODDAMNED JEEP!?

The Supply Sergeant puffs his cigar with a smile and turns to take his lumps.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Miller and his men weave through the chaos of the American staging area.

MILLER
We've got to make one stop.

Miller points the way for Sarge.

EXT. INTELLIGENCE TENT - DAY

Miller and his men skid to a stop in front of a perfectly white, taut-lined tent. A steady stream of ROARING vehicles and CHATTERING men move out around them. DISTANT GUNS RUMBLE. SPORADIC MEDIUM-DISTANCE EXPLOSIONS BOOM. Miller hops out.

MILLER
Wait here.

He strides into the tent.

INT. INTELLIGENCE TENT - DAY

Three bookish corporals hover over map tables like studious nerds the day before finals. They're breaking down and gridding field maps and covering them in plasticine. Tedious, detailed work.

One of them is TIM UPHAM, a thin, twenty-four year old, patrician with gentle, thoughtful eyes behind his thick glasses. He nervously jumps at the sound of a VERY DISTANT EXPLOSION, then he forces himself to concentrate on his work. Miller strides in.

MILLER
I'm looking for Corporal Upham.

Upham raises his eyes from his map and re-focuses.

UPHAM
Sir, I'm Upham.

MILLER
I understand you speak French and German.

UPHAM
Yes, sir.

MILLER
Do you have an accent?

UPHAM
A slight one in French. My German is clean. It has a touch of the Bavarian.

MILLER
Good, you've been re-assigned to me, we're going to Ramelle.

Upham knows enough geography to know what that means.

UPHAM
Uh, sir, there are Germans up at Ramelle.

MILLER
That's my understanding.

UPHAM
Lots of them.

MILLER
Do you have a problem with that, Corporal?

UPHAM
Sir, I've never been in combat. I make maps. I translate.

MILLER
I need a translator, all mine have been killed.

UPHAM
But, sir, I haven't held a gun since basic training.

MILLER
It'll come back to you. Get your gear.

Upham hesitates.

UPHAM
Sir, may I bring my typewriter?

Miller looks at him closely, not sure if he's joking.

UPHAM
I'm writing a book and I...

Miller's expression gives him his answer.

UPHAM
Uh, how about a pencil?

MILLER
A small one.

Miller shoos him off.

MILLER
Go, go...

Upham scurries away. Miller sighs.

EXT. ROAD LEADING FROM INTELLIGENCE TENT - DAY

Miller and his men peel out, now with Upham crammed with the others in the back of the jeep. As they drive off, the CAMERA CRANES UP to reveal the vast tableau of the biggest invasion in military history.

The scope of the operation is stunning. The beach is covered with mountains of supplies. A steady stream of vehicles winds up the dunes. Hundreds of barrage balloons, achored by heavy steel cables, hover over the entire scene. Off-shore, a massive Mulberry port is under construction, workers swarming over it like ants. Beyond that, thousands of ships and boats of every type and description. The smoke of hundreds of fires rises on the horizon. EXPLOSIONS, some distant, some close, BOOM and RUMBLE.

It's an awesome, breathtaking sight. Miller and his tiny band of men, weave their way through the middle of it, speeding away from the beach, heading inland, leaving the bulk of the American Army behind.

EXT. FRENCH ROAD - DAY

Miller and his men drive fast passing American vehicles and infantrymen moving forward. The sides of the road are littered with the debris of burning German vehicles, abandoned equipment, bodies.

Sarge drives. Miller reads a map. Upham, cradling a pristine M-1 rifle, is all eyes and ears. Jackson and Wade calmly take in the view. Reiben checks out the close quarters in the back of the jeep.

REIBEN
Captain, can I ask you question?

MILLER
Sure, Reiben.

REIBEN
Where are you planning on putting Private Ryan, sir?

Miller doesn't raise his eyes from the map.

REIBEN
(continuing)
It's just that it's kind of crowded back here, I was wondering if you're expecting to have more room on the way back?

Miller points out a turn to Sarge.

MILLER
Left

Sarge makes the turn. Miller folds up the map and pockets it.

MILLER
Now we've got a straight shot, due north, to Ramelle, twenty-six miles, two villages between here and there, St. Mere, then Bernay. We'll take the jeep as far as we can, then go on on foot.

SARGE
We in radio contact with anybody up there?

MILLER
Somebody put the wrong crystals in every one of the Hundred-and-First's radios the night before the drop, not one of them works. We're going in blind.

REIBEN
I usually like surprises.

SARGE
What are we likely to run into?

MILLER
A fucking mess, two maybe three Kraut divisions, no fronts, no lines, the drops were completely fouled up, we've got little pockets of paratroopers all over the place, trying to hang on. Command says we hold St. Mere, but north of that, it's all Krauts. Even if Ryan's where he's supposed to be, he's more than likely dead.

SARGE
Hell of a mission.

MILLER
Yep, hell of a mission.

IN THE BACK OF THE JEEP

Upham avidly takes in everything. He notices Reiben staring at him, grows nervous under his look and offers a hopeful smile.

UPHAM
Hi. So, uh, you're all Rangers?

Reiben, Jackson and Wade look at Upham as if he were an insect.

UPHAM
I'm Upham.
(pointing at his corporal's stripes)
Ignore these, please, I know all that breaks down in combat.

Their jaws drop.

REIBEN
(to Wade)
You want to shoot him, or should I?

WADE
It's not my turn.

REIBEN
(politely)
Jackson?

JACKSON
Hell, no, last time I shot a corporal, Cap'n Miller near bit my head off.

Upham reacts to the mention of Miller's name.

UPHAM
Miller?

MILLER
I don't want anybody to shoot him, that's an order. He speaks French and his German has a touch of the Bavarian.

UPHAM
Sir, are you Captain John Miller?

Miller sighs, he knows what's coming.

UPHAM
(continuing)
...who won the Congressional Medal of Hon...?

Upham's words are frozen in his throat by the warning glances of Miller's men. Miller himself remains relaxed but stone-faced.

No one speaks for a few seconds, then the moment passes as if it had never happened.

REIBEN
Captain, I gotta tell you, the irony of this mission is fucking killing me.

MILLER
Yeah, how so?

REIBEN
I should be on my way to Caen, sir. It's like Beethoven, the guy's one of the greatest composers ever lived and he goes deaf. Go figure, I mean, who'd he piss off? And here I am, the Beethoven of ladies foundation garments, one step away from Caen, the center of the known lingerie universe and instead, I'm going to Ramelle to save some fucking private who's probably already dead.

MILLER
There's got to be a bright side, look for it.

REIBEN
Sir, you know what Ramelle is famous for? Cheese. The rest of the company is going to Caen and we're going to the goddamned cheese capital of France. There is no bright side.

MILLER
There's always a bright side.

REIBEN
I'm listening, sir.

MILLER
Well, I, for one, like cheese.

Wade pipes up cheerfully.

WADE
Hell, I don't mind going to Ramelle, as long as there's something up there for me to blow up.

REIBEN
Well, you're a happy idiot.

THEY ROUND A TURN

Skid to a stop at a:

BOTTLENECK OF AMERICAN VEHICLES

A LIEUTENANT is roadmaster. Miller calls to him.

MILLER
How's the road up to St. Mere?

LIEUTENANT
Bad, sir. There're some eighty-eights hiding somewhere, knocking the hell out of our traffic.

MILLER
Anybody getting through?

LIEUTENANT
The lucky ones.

Miller nods to Sarge who floors it. They take off, spraying gravel behind them.

EXT. ST. MERE ROAD - DAY

The jeep barrels down the road, fast. The road is pock-marked with craters. They pass the wreckage of a pair of American jeeps. Direct hits. Sarge swerves around them without slowing.

AN AMERICAN TROOP TRUCK SMOLDERS

On the side of the road, surrounded by the charred bodies of a dozen American troops. It's a nightmare vision. Upham grows weak at the sight. Miller takes note of Upham's reaction.

IN THE BACK

The men bounce up and down like stuffed animals, doing their best to not be thrown out.

REIBEN
Hell, this is better than Coney Island!

A HUGE BUMP

Bounces Reiben up and slams him back down on his shovel. He HOLLARS IN PAIN.

MILLER
Just trying to make room for Ryan.

Reiben shoots Miller a smile and shifts his belt, moving his shovel from under his bruised ass.

THEY ROUND A BEND

See a long, straight stretch of road. Half-a-dozen burning, obliterated American vehicles. A gauntlet to run.

AN EIGHTY-EIGHT SHELL SCREAMS IN

Lands right behind them. BLOWS A NEW CRATER.

MILLER
(sweetly)
Sarge?

SARGE FLOORS IT. Everyone hangs on.

ANOTHER SHELL EXPLODES

Thirty yards ahead of them.

MILLER

Directs Sarge off the road.

MILLER
They've got the road zeroed.

SARGE

Yanks the wheel, driving the jeep off the road.

THE JEEP BOUNCES

Off the shoulder. Nearly throwing everyone out. Somehow they hang on. The jeep tears along the rutted field.

ANOTHER EXPLOSION

Just behind them.

SARGE DRIVES MADLY

Not slowing down. Trying to avoid the biggest ruts and bumps.

ANOTHER EXPLOSION

Close on their side. Showers them with debris.

SARGE
Jesus Christ!

MILLER SCANS THE TERRAIN

Sees a cluster of buildings about half-a-mile ahead.

MILLER
They've got a hell of a spotter somewhere.

ANOTHER EXPLOSION

Even closer. The jeep's PEPPERED WITH SHRAPNEL. They BARREL THROUGH the smoke.

MILLER
S-curves, Sarge.

SARGE

Turns shallow curves without slowing down.

SUDDENLY SEES A CRATER

Tries to avoid it. Too late. Brakes. PLOWS into overturned earth. STOPS SHORT.

REIBEN, UPHAM, WADE AND JACKSON

THROWN from the jeep. TUMBLE into the dirt. Not hurt.

SARGE AND MILLER

Hang on. Stay in the jeep but are battered. All stunned.

MILLER

Is first to regain his bearings. Jumps up. Checks out the jeep. Undamaged. Deep in the soft dirt.

AN EIGHTY-EIGHT SHELL SCREAMS IN

EXPLODES THIRTY YARDS LEFT

MILLER
Sarge! Reverse!

Sarge puts his head back on and throws the jeep it into gear. The wheels spin. Miller throws his shoulder into the jeep. Yells to the others.

MILLER
COME ON! YOU WANNA WALK?

STILL DAZED

Reiben, Wade, Jackson, Upham screw their heads back on. Shoulder into the jeep. Push for all they're worth. The WHEELS STILL SPIN.

ANOTHER EIGHTY-EIGHT SHELL LANDS EXPLODES THIRTY YARDS <u>RIGHT</u>

MILLER IGNORES IT

He's the only one who does.

SARGE
Captain, they got us zeroed.

Upham is very nervous.

UPHAM
That's bracketing, right?

They all ignore him.

UPHAM
I know about bracketing. I read about it. The next one is going to land right on us.

MILLER
FORWARD! FORWARD!
(beat)
NOW REVERSE!

Sarge SLAMS THE JEEP INTO REVERSE. Rocks it. SLAMS IT BACK INTO FORWARD. Makes progress.

ALL THE MEN PUSH, ALL EYES UP. WAITING FOR THE NEXT SHELL.

SARGE
Uh, Captain...

MILLER
PUSH!

SARGE
Uh, Captain...

THE TIRES SCREAM

A bit more progress. It's almost out.

THEY ALL PUSH LIKE MANIACS

Knowing that shell is coming any second. Upham is beside himself.

SARGE
(sweetly)
Oh, Captain...

ONE MORE PUSH

The jeep rocks back in, deeper.

MILLER
SHIT!

THEY HEAR THE SCREAM OF THE SHELL

MILLER BARKS TO HIS MEN

MILLER
GO!

THE MEN

Instantly take off. Away from the jeep. As fast as they can.

THE SHELL SCREAMS IN

The men hit the dirt.

DIRECT HIT

OBLITERATES THE JEEP

THE MEN

Barely out of the BLAST PERIMETER. STUNNED by the concussion. SHOWERED with dirt, rock and debris.

MILLER

Is first up. Sarge and the men struggle to their feet. Hear MORE INCOMING. Miller grabs Upham by the collar and pulls him up.

MILLER
HERE COME THE MORTARS!

THEY ALL TAKE OFF

Running as fast as they can.

THE FIRST OF THE MORTAR SHELLS COME IN

The eighty-eight is big, with pauses spaces between. But there must be a dozen motars firing. The shells are almost constant.

THE FIELD

The six Americans run madly, in zig-zag patterns through the gauntlet of MORTAR EXPLOSIONS.

BOOM

RUNNING, STUMBLING

BOOM, BOOM, BOOM

UPHAM IS THROWN TO THE GROUND

Miller yanks him up. Half-drags him to the edge of the field.

THEY MAKE IT TO THE TREES

Keep running. Through the bushes and brambles. Thirty yards in.

THE EXPLOSIONS STOP

THE MEN ALL STOP

Panting. Stuggling to catch their breath. Check their body parts. Everything's there. They have their weapons, most of their gear.

Reiben looks back through the trees at THE JEEP, which is nothing more than a burning carcass. He shakes his head.

REIBEN
General Gavin is going to be very irritated at you, Captain.

MILLER

Stands on the edge of the woods, almost in a trance.

UPHAM
Captain, I...

SARGE
Sssssh!

Miller, far away, quickly shifts his eyes and ears from position to position.

MILLER
Sarge, maps.

Sarge quickly opens up the map case. The men are dead silent, frozen in place.

MILLER
Two eighty-eights, just under two-and-a-half miles, that way, vector from the jeep, through those two trees at the base of the hill. The mortars came from behind that rise, there, four of them.

Sarge quickly starts vectoring on the map. Miller snaps out of it.

MILLER
Wade, the radio.

Wade instantly starts cranking it up. Upham is amazed.

UPHAM
You can tell all that, just by the sound, sir?

MILLER
That's not all. There were nine gunners on the eighty-eights, one had a broken heel on his boot, two had bratwurst for supper last night, one of them is named Fritz, the other, Hans, maybe, I don't know, it's hard to tell.

JACKSON
Corporal, you have just seen one of Captain Miller's many God-given talents. If, by some miracle, you survive, you will witness many more of them.

Sarge finishes vectoring.

SARGE
Got it, sir. We gonna go take care of those eighty-eights?

MILLER
That's not what we're here for.

WADE
(re. radio)
I've got command, Captain.

Miller takes the handset from Wade and the map from Sarge.

MILLER
(into radio)
This is Baker Charley One, fire mark, sector three, foxtrot quadrant, four-three by baker-three. Two eighty-eights. Tell our boys to come in low from the east in case the Krauts have ack-ack. Good hunting. Over.

A VOICE ON THE RADIO SIGNS OFF through the static. Wade packs up the radio. Miller folds up the map.

JACKSON
Sir, wouldn't take us but a minute to put out them eighty-eights.

SARGE
He's right, Captain, it might be kind of dangerous for those flyboys.

MILLER
Tell that to Private James Ryan.
We've got our orders. Let's go.

Miller heads off without pausing or looking back. The rest of the men don't like it, but they follow. Upham trails, amazed at Miller.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Miller walks point. His men follow warily. Upham falls in alongside Reiben.

UPHAM
So, where are you from?

REIBEN
Get lost.

Upham smiles lamely and moves on to Jackson.

UPHAM
So, where are you from?

JACKSON
You writin' a book or somethin'?

UPHAM
As a matter of fact, I am.

JACKSON
Figured.

Wade overhears and smiles at Upham.

WADE
I'm Wade, that's spelled, W-A-D-E, I'm small but wiry, with piercing, steel-grey eyes, and a rough-hewn but handsome face, I'm from Colorado, my father's a mining engineer, don't you take notes?

Upham shakes his head.

UPHAM
Demolition, right?

WADE
Since I was nine years old. They got a lot of explosives around mines. Me and my little brother could get into any warehouse you ever saw. Damn, we had fun!

Jackson shrugs.

JACKSON
I'm Jackson. I'm from West Fork, Tennessee. My pappy's a preacher. Him and his two brothers got a ministry, The Blessed Church of the Wandering Gospel.

UPHAM
In West Fork?

JACKSON
In the back of a nineteen and thirty-one stretch Hudson with a big ole' trailer.

UPHAM
No kidding.

JACKSON
I don't make jokes about things of, or related to, the preaching of the Holy Gospel, including the ministerial calling of my family.

UPHAM
So they travel around from place to place and preach?

JACKSON
We got us a tent, forty-two feet across, eighteen feet at center, hundred-and-ten foldin' chairs. Circuit's eleven towns, covers all 'a Hasset County and most 'a Weller County. I expect that upon completion of my military service I will be joinin' said ministry.

UPHAM
What about the Captain? Where's he from?.

They all shake their heads. Miller's out of earshot.

JACKSON
You figure that out, you got yourself one nice prize.

SARGE
Over three hundred bucks, last I heard.

WADE
Company's got a pool, five bucks gets you in, whoever guesses where the Captain's from and what he did as a civilian gets it all.

JACKSON
The whole kit and kaboodle.

UPHAM
But everybody's heard of him, he won the Congressional Medal of Honor, he saved a dozen men.

REIBEN
We know.

UPHAM
Somebody must know where he's from, what he did for a living.

SARGE
Somebody probably does.

UPHAM
Why don't you just ask him?

JACKSON
The Captain prefers not to discuss certain aspects of his life, in particular, everything up to and including his enlistment in the United States Army.

SARGE
I've been with him since Anzio. I'm closer to him than I am to my own brother but I don't even know what state he's from. Somewhere in the Northeast as near as I can figure. I don't even have a clue what he did for a living as civilian.

Reiben shakes his head.

REIBEN
No one's gonna win the money for the simple reason that the Captain never was a civilian. They assembled him at O.C.S. out of spare body parts from dead G.I.'s. I know this for a fact.

JACKSON
(defensively)
You got somethin' against the Cap'n?

REIBEN
Hell, no. I think he's the best officer in the whole goddamned army, bar none.

They all nod in assent, no argument there.

JACKSON
You got that right.

Miller walks on ahead, unaware of their conversation. Upham watches Miller, with even more curiosity.

EXT. HEDGEROW FIELD - DAY

Miller and his men walk along a hedgerow that parallels a country cow path. They're staying close to the cover of the brush. Miller walks tail now.

JACKSON
Captain, my feet are most uncomfortable. If I'd 'a known we was gonna have to walk all the way to Ramelle, I never would 'a volunteered for this here mission.

MILLER
You didn't volunteer, Jackson.

JACKSON
I most likely would have, sir, had I been given the opportunity.

REIBEN
If we find Ryan and he's still alive, that son-of-a-bitch is gonna carry this goddamned B.A.R. back to the beach for me.

JACKSON
Army life is too dang easy, my feet have gone soft. Back home, we go out squirrel huntin', I walk forever and a day and then some, don't even raise a blister.

REIBEN
You know what a B.A.R. weighs? Nineteen and a half pounds, not counting ammo.
(re. ammo bandoliers)
And you think these things are comfortable? They may look good but they weigh twelve pounds each, that's thirty-six pounds, right there.

WADE
So what? I've got three satchel charges, six gammon grenades, a dozen-and-a-half pineapples, and all my regular gear. You don't hear me complaining.

REIBEN
That's because, as I have pointed out on numerous occasions, you are a happy idiot.

WADE
No, I just happen to take the Captain's advice and look at the bright side of things.

UPHAM
How do you do it?

WADE
It's easy, it runs in my family, take my grandfather, for example...

REIBEN
Oh, Christ, now we gotta listen to that grandfather thing again.

WADE
As I was saying, before I was so rudely interrupted, my grandfather got old, as grandfathers tend to do. He needed someone to take care of him. We move around all the time, going from one mine to another, so we had to put him in a home. Nice enough place but kind of depressing. But not for Grandad. He just convinced himself he was on a cruise ship, going to Tahiti, he had his own cabin, first class, with room service. It just so happened that the weather was always lousy, so he never bothered to go up on deck. Happiest guy you ever saw until the day he died.

UPHAM
You think he really believed it?

WADE
Who knows? It worked.

REIBEN
Fine, you convince yourself you got a pack full of feathers and goddamned Private James Ryan can carry my fucking gear.

WADE
Reiben, you can be very unpleasant to be around sometimes.

REIBEN
You want unpleasant? Just wait, I can do much better than this.

WADE
Look at Upham, you don't hear him complaining.

Upham, feeling bold and a bit naughty, decides to give it a shot.

UPHAM
Well, as a matter of fact, I was just thinking...

The men roll their eyes, expecting the worst.

UPHAM
(continuing)
That I'm so fucking tired of this goddamned walking, I'd pay a thousand dollars to see that bastard Ryan crawl on his belly over an acre of broken glass to hear my great-aunt Martha fart through a field-phone.

The men are stunned.

REIBEN
Jesus Christ, he's a natural!

MILLER
Upham, are you sure you've never been in combat?

Upham wiggles with pride.

UPHAM
Positive, sir, I'm certain I'd remember.

Miller eyes Upham respectfully and nods to the men.

MILLER
He's good.

They walk on.

JACKSON
Cap'n, my feet are most uncomfortable.

Miller smiles, situation normal.

EXT. ST. MERE - LATE AFTERNOON

A small town has been reduced to rubble and is still an active battlefield. HEAVY SMALL ARMS FIRE. GRENADE AND MORTAR EXPLOSIONS. MEDIUM ARTILLERY BEYOND. American soldiers crouch in doorways, FIRING at well-placed Germans.

Some French civilians dash across a street. A man and a couple of women, one carrying a child. They make it across and disappear into the remains of a building.

Miller runs up and flattens himself against a wall at a corner. Sarge and the other men follow in leap-frog, spread out down the block behind him.

Miller glances around the corner, taking a quick mental picture of a GATHERING OF G.I.'S crouching in the cover of an alley across the street and down the block. They are CAPTAIN HAMILL, about Miller's age, and HIS MEN.

As Miller ducks back behind the corner, A GERMAN BULLET SMASHES into the bricks where his head was an instant before.

Miller motions Jackson across first.

MILLER
Stay low.

Jackson gathers himself, takes off. GERMAN BULLETS BLAST, kicking up the cobblestones behind him. Jackson zig-zags and makes it to the cover of the far side.

JACKSON
Dang! That was close!

Miller nods to Upham.

MILLER
Your turn.

Upham, scared shitless, doesn't move. Miller speaks to him very gently.

MILLER
Zig-zag, change your pace a couple times, you'll be alright.

Upham's frozen. He can barely breathe. Miller sighs.

MILLER
Okay, I'm going to draw fire for you.
(sternly)
But if I do, you goddamned well better go.

Upham nods. Miller gathers himself, takes a deep breath.

CLOSE SHOT: MILLER'S HAND quivers.

MILLER

Looks to Upham.

MILLER
Ready?

Upham nods, still terrified.

MILLER STEPS INTO THE OPEN

Stands motionless, presenting himself to the German snipers.

MILLER
Go.

Upham runs.

A GERMAN BULLET HITS THE BRICKS NEAR MILLER.

He doesn't budge.

UPHAM TEARS ACROSS THE STREET very, very fast.

REIBEN watches Upham run.

REIBEN
Hey, that guy can move.

A GERMAN BULLET WHIZZES past Miller's ear.

UPHAM gets to the far side.

MILLER DUCKS BACK around the corner. Reiben and Wade don't even react to what Miller has just done. Sarge is pissed. He shakes his head at Miller, like an irritated parent.

SARGE
(under his breath so only Miller can hear)
Damn fool.
(beat)
Sir.

REIBEN
Captain, he's fast!

MILLER
(glances at Sarge,
speaks to Reiben)
Glad of it.

UPHAM

On the other side of the street, crouches in a doorway with Jackson. Upham is a bit in shock, less from the nearness of the bullets than from what Miller just did for him.

MILLER

DASHES across the street.

GERMAN BULLETS TRAIL HIM, shattering the cobblestones, inches behind him.

HE MAKES IT across. Calls back to Sarge.

MILLER
Bring 'em over.

UPHAM, tries to thank Miller.

UPHAM
Captain, I...

Miller ignores him, motions to Sarge, Reiben and Wade.

MILLER
One at a time.

MILLER

Ducks out of the doorway and crouch-runs down the block. He passes a:

BOMBED OUT BUILDING

Out of the line of fire. A dozen dead American soldiers lined up on the ground. The battered, bloody bodies, only partially covered by ponchos.

Some badly wounded G.I.'s are being treated next to the dead. Blood puddles have spread out onto the sidewalk.

MILLER

Sees the dead and wounded, shows no reaction. Runs to:

AN ALLEY

Captain Hamill and his men are bunched there, out of the line of fire. He's sending off a squad to continue their door-to-door.

CAPTAIN HAMILL
Fundamentals, short runs, double up at the corners, one man close, one man wide. Be careful. Go.

The squad takes off. Captain Hamill sees Miller. The two captains glance at the bars on their shoulders, then speak familiarly.

CAPTAIN HAMILL
How was the road in?

MILLER
We had a jeep until a few hours ago, a nice one, it had a cute little flag with a couple of stars on it.

CAPTAIN HAMILL
Oh, what a shame.

One by one, Miller's men join them in the alley.

MILLER
We called in a strike on the eighty-eights that took it out, but it's the Kraut spotter that counts, wherever the hell that bastard is.

Captain Hamill points across a wide field toward a distant chateau that has a private chapel with a fifty-foot steeple.

CAPTAIN HAMILL
That's where your boy is. We've been trying to get him since this morning. He killed two of my men trying to get close enough for a shot.

Miller eyes the distant steeple.

MILLER
Jackson.

Jackson steps up. Miller points to the steeple. Jackson knows what he's supposed to do. He puts down his M-1 and takes off the long, zippered, leather sheath, strapped to his back.

He spits a massive bullet of tobacco juice, then calmly and methodically unzips his leather case and pulls out a very unusual, long-barrel, rifle.

Miller and his men give him some room. Hamill and his men, along with Upham, watch curiously.

Jackson opens a two-foot high tripod with a flick of his wrist, sits down and carefully attaches the rifle to it. Then he takes a scope from a narrow wooden box and mounts it. He adjusts the eye-piece and clicks in the bolt-action. Upham is fascinated.

UPHAM
What is that?

Jackson pulls back the bolt and loads a single, over-sized shell.

JACKSON
Thirty-ought-six, Norton long-barrel with dual-groove, parallel rifling, elevated three-glass scope and a single-throw hammer.

UPHAM
The Army gave you that?

JACKSON
Yep.

UPHAM
You must be a hell a shot.

JACKSON
Not where I come from.

Jackson sights on a tree about a thousand yards away and FIRES. Evaluates. Calibrates the scope. He re-loads.

Jackson FIRES AGAIN. Evaluates. Perfect. He wipes the dirt and sweat from his forehead, puts his eye to the sight and waits, absolutely motionless.

UPHAM
That must be four thousand yards.

JACKSON
(without taking his eye from the scope)
Forty-two-hundred, I figure.

UPHAM
You take account of the wind?

Jackson doesn't dignify that with an answer but he looks back with an expression that clearly says, "What are you, some kind of fucking idiot?"

Reiben puts himself between Upham and Jackson.

REIBEN
(put-on Southern accent)
Dang right, he take 'count of the wind, ain't ya'll ever heard a Kentucky windage?

Jackson keeps his eye to the scope and his finger on the trigger.

JACKSON
Reiben, how many time I got to tell you, I'm from Tennessee.

REIBEN
They got squirrels there, too, right?

Jackson FIRES. Waits. A tiny smile. He starts taking apart the rifle. A very impressed Captain Hamill barks to his Radioman.

CAPTAIN HAMILL
Get a hold of Command, tell them the St. Mere road is open.

The Radioman cranks up his radio. Captain Hamill turns to Miller.

CAPTAIN HAMILL
How far back is the rest of division?

MILLER
Very far, they're not coming this way, they're going to take Caen first.

CAPTAIN HAMILL
Goddamn it, I was afraid of that. We're in a lot of trouble up here, and it's gonna get worse before it gets better. How many men did you bring?

MILLER
Five, but we not staying, we're on our way to Ramelle.

CAPTAIN HAMILL
Shit, are you the guys going up to find Private Ryan?

MILLER
Yeah, you know about that?

CAPTAIN HAMILL
Command radioed, wanted to know if he came in with the early wounded or dead.

Several of CAPTAIN HAMILL'S MEN, among them a GENTLE-FACED PRIVATE, prick up their ears at the mention of Private Ryan.

CAPTAIN HAMILL
We're supposed to tell you, they intercepted a German transmission after you left. The Krauts have two companies on their way to Ramelle to take back that bridge, they'll be there sometime late tomorrow.

MILLER
Wonderful.

CAPTAIN HAMILL
If Ryan's alive, you'd better get him the hell out of there before those Krauts show up.

MILLER
How do we get out of here?

CAPTAIN HAMILL
You don't, until tonight, we're hemmed in real tight. After dark you try to slip out to the east. If you tip-toe, stay off the main roads and roll a few sevens, you've got a fair chance of making it up to Ramelle by tomorrow night.

Miller processes the information. Captain Hamill shakes his head.

CAPTAIN HAMILL
Tough, huh? Three brothers?

Miller shrugs.

CAPTAIN HAMILL
We sure as hell could use your help here, but I understand what you're doing.

MILLER
Yeah?

CAPTAIN HAMILL
Good luck.

MILLER
Thanks.

CAPTAIN HAMILL
I mean it. Find him. Get him home.

Miller is a bit taken aback by Captain Hamill's forceful sincerity. Then he shakes it off and motions to his men.

MILLER
Let's find someplace to hole up.

Miller nods to Captain Hamill, then, as he moves to the head of the alley, Miller passes Upham.

UPHAM
Sir, I'm sorry about what happened, I...

MILLER
(interrupting)
It's was nothing.

UPHAM
But you could have gotten killed and I...

MILLER
(interrupting)
Like I said, it was nothing.
(to the men)
Don't bunch up.

He takes off, crouch-running back down the block. Upham watches him go.

UPHAM
Did you see what he did, back there? He stepped right into the open, so I could get across.

JACKSON
Shit, that was no big deal.

WADE
They can't kill him.

SARGE
Like hell they can't.

REIBEN
Wade's right, it's some kind of scientific, magnetic thing, I can't explain it, but I've seen it.

WADE
We all have, he's got nine lives, or he's bulletproof, or some damn thing.

The men are equal parts joking and admiring. Sarge is neither.

SARGE
No one's bulletproof. No one.
(beat)
C'mon, stay low.

Sarge takes off after Miller.

EXT. ST. MERE CATHEDRAL - DUSK

Miller and his men are bivouaced in the middle of the ruins of a medieval church. Miller, settled into a comfortable spot in the debris, eating his K-rations, looks very relaxed. Reiben paces.

REIBEN
Captain, could you please explain the math of this mission to me?

MILLER
Sure, what do you want to know?

REIBEN
Well, sir, in purely arithmetic terms, since when does six equals one. What's the sense in risking six guys to save one?

MILLER
Ours is not to reason why.

REIBEN
Huh?

MILLER
Never mind, don't worry, we'll pick up this kid, high-tail it back to division, everything'll work out fine.

REIBEN
I'd much rather die in Caen than Ramelle, sir. It's a personal thing.

MILLER
Reiben, there's a fairly good chance you're not going to die at all.

REIBEN
Easy for you to say, sir.
(beat)
Fucking James Ryan, I'd like to wring his fucking neck.

SARGE
Jesus, Reiben, think of the poor bastard's mother.

REIBEN
Hey, I got a mother. Jackson, you got a mother?

JACKSON
Last I knew.

REIBEN
Wade, Sarge, Corporal Insect, all of us, hell, I'll bet even the Captain has a mother.

Miller smiles. Reiben eyes him and reconsiders.

REIBEN
Well, maybe not the Captain, but the rest of us have mothers.

MILLER
You have orders, too.

JACKSON
Sir, I have an opinion on this matter.

MILLER
I'd love to hear it.

JACKSON
Seems to me, Cap'n, this mission is a serious misallocation of valuable military resources.

MILLER
Go on.

JACKSON
Well, sir, by my way a thinkin' I am a finely made instrument of warfare. What I mean by that is, if you was to put me with this here sniper rifle anywhere up to and includin' one mile from Adolf Hitler, with a clear line of sight, war's over.

Miller nods.

MILLER
Reiben, I want you to listen closely to Jackson. This is the way to gripe. Jackson, continue.

JACKSON
Yes, sir. It seems to me, sir, that the entire resources of the United States Army oughta be dedicated to one thing and one thing only, and that is to put me and this here weapon on a rooftop, smack-dab in the middle of Berlin, Germany. Now I ain't one to question decisions made up on high, sir, but it seems to me that saving one private, no matter how grievous the losses of his family, is a waste of my God-given talent.

MILLER
Wade?

WADE
Hell, I don't mind this mission, sir, as long as there's something up at Ramelle for...

REIBEN
(finishing Wade's sentence)
...for you to blow up, yeah, yeah, we heard that.

MILLER
Upham?

UPHAM
Pass.

MILLER
Sarge?

SARGE
I'm just here to keep a bunch of numb-nuts, including one certain, frequently suicidal, tempter-of-fate, from getting themselves killed.

Reiben eyes Miller.

REIBEN
And what about you, Captain?

Miller looks at Reiben, shocked.

MILLER
Reiben, what's the matter with you? I don't gripe to you. I'm a captain. There's a chain of command. Griping goes one way, up, only up, never down. You gripe to me, I gripe to my superior officers. Up, get it? I don't gripe to you, I don't gripe in front of you. How long you been in the army?

REIBEN
I'm sorry, sir, I apologize.
(beat)
But if you weren't a captain, or if I were a major, what would you say?

Miller considers his response.

MILLER
In that case, I would say this is an excellent mission, with an extremely valuable objective, worthy of my best efforts.

Reiben rolls his eyes. Miller plays it straight, with no obvious sarcasm.

MILLER
(continuing)
In addition, as I pointed out earlier, I have a fondness for cheese and I hope to have the opportunity to sample some of the Ramelle products, when we arrive there, to see if they live up to their excellent reputation. Moreover, I feel heartfelt sorrow for the mother of Private James Ryan and I'm more than willing to lay down my life, and the lives of my men, especially you, Reiben, to help relieve her suffering.

The men thoroughly enjoy the performance.

REIBEN
Sir, if you were not a captain, I would compliment you, now, for being an excellent liar.

MILLER
But I am a captain. If I were not a captain, I would thank you for the compliment and tell you that the ability to lie comes from being a top-notch poker player, which I am, having learned at the side of my mother who is, by popular acclaim, the best poker player in...

The men all lean forward expectantly, believing they're about to find out Miller's home town. Miller smiles.

MILLER
(continuing)
...my home town, which shall remain un-named.

The men ease back, disappointed.

MILLER
Any further thoughts on the subject?

REIBEN
Yes, sir, as a final note, I'd like to say, fuck our orders, fuck Ramelle, fuck the cheese capital of France and while we're at it, fuck Private James Ryan.

MILLER
I'll make a note of your suggestions but I'll leave that last one to you, especially if he's already dead.

The men wince and laugh. Miller checks his watch and gets serious.

MILLER
We move out in two hours, try and get some sleep.

The men know when to can it. Without another word, they all settle down into the debris, close their eyes and try to follow Miller's order. Upham looks around at these strange men, then, a simple, hard glare from Miller makes him follow suit.

Miller looks at his men, then pulls out his map case and his flashlight. He turns it on. Alone, in the dim glow of the light, he studies his maps while his men rest.

EXT. ST. MERE CATHEDRAL - NIGHT (LATER)

Dark. ARTILLERY RUMBLES IN THE DISTANCE. Reiben, Jackson, Wade and Upham sleep. Miller still sits in the glow of his flashlight, studying his maps. Sarge lies near him, awake, watching him. Sarge notices some unopened envelopes in Miller's map case and speaks quietly to him.

SARGE
You ever going to open those letters?

Miller keeps his eyes on the maps.

MILLER
Maybe.

SARGE
It's not normal, not reading letters from home.

MILLER
Since when have things been normal?

SARGE
You got me. Afraid of bad news?

MILLER
Nope.

SARGE
Good news?

Miller looks at Sarge. A moment passes between the two of them, then Miller takes refuge in the maps. Sarge looks at the men.

SARGE
You think they'll be alright?

MILLER
They're fine. As long as they can gripe, they'll be alright.

SARGE
And what about you?

Miller considers the question, doesn't answer.

MILLER
The guys here aren't going to be able to hold out until battalion shows up.

SARGE
Nope.

MILLER
Command isn't going to let them withdraw and the Germans sure as hell aren't going to let them surrender.

SARGE
Three for three.

MILLER
If we stayed, we could make a difference.

SARGE
You're kidding yourself.

MILLER
You never know.

They sit in silence for a moment.

SARGE
I hope this boy Ryan is worth it.

MILLER
Now you're the one kidding yourself.
(beat)
Hell of a mission.

SARGE
Yep, hell of a mission.

Miller looks at his watch, rises and barks at the men.

MILLER
Rise and shine, boys. Let's go.

Grumbling, the men get up and start shouldering up their gear.

EXT. ST. MERE STREET - NIGHT

SMALL ARMS FIRE ECHOS though the village. DISTANT ARTILLERY BOOMS. Miller leads his men from the ruins of the cathedral toward the outskirts of town. They're just a small squad, but these six, heavily-armed men, in full battle gear, are very formidable-looking.

EXT. ST. MERE - OUTSKIRTS - NIGHT

Miller's men are getting ready to move out. Captain Hamill and a few of his men are there to see them off. Suddenly:

A FLASH OF LIGHT APPEARS ON THE HORIZON

Then REPEATED FLASHES OF LIGHT. The sky is on fire. The AIR TREMBLES. A FAR OFF RUMBLING THUNDER ROLLS over the countryside like a tidal wave.

Then, THE OPPOSITE HORIZON LIGHTS UP AS WELL.

IT'S A MASSIVE ARTILLERY BATTLE. The MAGNITUDE OF THE FURY is incredible, strange, other-worldly.

EVERY MAN THERE IS TRANSFIXED.

Frozen in place. The lights play on their faces.

MILLER looks down and sees his hand quivering.

SARGE notices, says nothing.

MILLER stares at his hand, forcing it to stop.

Their eyes go back to the BLAZING SKY.

SARGE
(awe-struck)
Makes you feel small, doesn't it?

MILLER
It doesn't take this.

Upham's face shows more fear than awe.

UPHAM
I wasn't made for this.

MILLER
(bitterly)
You think the rest of us were?

Upham recoils. Miller instantly regrets his words. He turns to Upham and sees that he's really scared. Miller gets a hold of himself and speaks gently.

MILLER
Don't worry, Upham, God'll protect you, this shit's gonna keep him up all night, anyway.

Upham manages a slight smile. Miller watches the lights for a moment more, then he pretends to shrug it off.

MILLER
Let's go, this ain't what they pay us for.

Captain Hamill is next to snap himself out of it. He points the way.

CAPTAIN HAMILL
Along the wall, about thirty yards, there's a gate, on the other side, a drainage ditch, stay low until you clear the second field, then you'll hit the woods.

As Miller and his men shoulder their gear and prepare to move out, one of Captain Hamill's men, the Gentle-Faced Private who was so interested in the talk of Private Ryan, steps up with a couple bandoliers of B.A.R. ammo. He offers them to Reiben.

GENTLE-FACED PRIVATE
Here.

Reiben looks at the bandoliers and is about to give a smart-ass response, when a look at the Gentle-Faced Private's vulnerable expression stops the comment dead.

GENTLE-FACED PRIVATE
My older brother was killed at Guadalcanal...these might come in handy.

Reiben takes the ammo.

REIBEN
(gently)
Just what I need.

Miller steps over, takes the bandoliers from Reiben and hands them back to the Gentle-Faced Private.

MILLER
Thanks, but you may need these more than us, or Ryan.

Captain Hamill nods to the Gentle-Faced Private who takes the ammo back.

MILLER
Let's move out.

Miller and his men head off along the wall into the darkness, lit intermittantly by the distant flashes. Captain Hamill and his beleaguered men, watch them go with dread and a strange bit of hope.

EXT. FRENCH COUNTRY SIDE - NIGHT

The FINAL RUMBLES of the DISTANT ARTILLERY fade away. The night is dark. The band of six Americans makes their way warily along a French cart path. Sarge eases up alongside Miller and speaks quietly to him. The others don't overhear.

SARGE
How long's your hand been shaking?

MILLER
A couple of weeks. It started in Portsmouth when they brought us down for loading.

SARGE
Is it getting worse?

MILLER
No. It comes and goes. It stops when I look at it.

SARGE
You may have to find yourself a new line of work, this one doesn't seem to agree with you anymore.

MILLER
I'll be alright.

Sarge looks at Miller, closely, evaluating him, they walk on.

EXT. FRENCH CART PATH - NIGHT (LATER)

Farther along. The men are tired but alert. Jackson is at point. Miller behind him. The others at intervals. Sarge brings up the rear.

A SOUND. Jackson stops. No one speaks, they communicate only with hand signals.

JACKSON SIGNALS to Miller, ten, twenty, thirty men coming.

MILLER SIGNALS for the men to get off the path. They ease into the brush. An instant later, a PAIR WARY GERMAN INFANTRY MEN appear.

REIBEN grips his B.A.R. and looks to Miller for permission to open up. Miller shakes his head and signals, "let them go."

A moment later AN ENTIRE PLATOON OF GERMANS rounds the bend. Fifty men. Heavily armed. REIBEN breathes a sigh of relief and lowers his B.A.R.

THE GERMAN PLATOON passes, their boots no more than two feet from the faces of the hidden Americans. Upham is wide-eyed with fear. The others are stone-faced.

THE GERMANS PASS.

MILLER MOTIONS for his men to hold their positions.

UPHAM doesn't see the signal. He stands, breathing a sigh of relief, just as a GERMAN WHIP-TAIL SQUAD appears, trailing the platoon by thirty meters, protecting their rear.

UPHAM FREEZES. He's standing, barely in the shadows, nearly exposed. Shitting bricks.

Pissed, MILLER prepares to fire. The Whip-tail squad approaches.

Then, the GERMANS PASS, miraculously, not seeing Upham in the shadows. They walk on and disappear. Upham is weak-kneed, amazed that he's still alive.

MILLER shoots a devastating glare at him, then signals the rest of the men to follow him into the woods. Upham scurries after Miller, staying close on his heels.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

The little band of Americans walks along the edge of a field, parallel to a cart path. Wary.

Miller notices Jackson and Wade drifting too close to each other. He SNAPS HIS FINGERS, getting their attention, and motions curtly for them to open it up a bit. They do so.

EXT. CROSSROADS - NIGHT

Dark. FAINT DISTANT ARTILLERY. Miller checks the map as Sarge shines a red flashlight on an array of directional signs. One of them reads: "Ramelle 16 Km."

Miller puts away the map. Checks the horizon. The first glow of dawn is visible.

MILLER
It'll be light, soon. Let's pick it up.

EXT. FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE - DAWN

First light. The SOUND OF DISTANT GUNS has been replaced by the CHIRPING OF BIRDS. The Americans are taking five.

Miller stands, a bit apart from the others, looking out at the view. It's lovely. Dew shimmers on the long grass. The war is far away.

Upham walks up next to him. They look out at the view together without speaking for a moment.

MILLER
It looks like a Renoir.

UPHAM
Yes. Do you know Sibelius' Fourth Symphony, The Normandy?

MILLER
I've been humming it.

UPHAM
I heard.

MILLER
It seemed appropriate.

UPHAM
You know classical music?

MILLER
Some.

UPHAM
Where are you from, Captain?

Miller smiles.

MILLER
What's the pool up to?

Upham smiles, caught.

UPHAM
Over three-hundred.

MILLER
I'll tell you what, if I'm still alive when it hits five-hundred, I'll let you know and we'll split the money.

UPHAM
If that's the way you feel, why don't we wait until it's up to a thousand?

MILLER
I don't expect to live that long.

Upham looks closely at Miller and sees that he means it.

UPHAM
Five hundred, then.

Miller takes a last look at the view and allows himself to feel an overwhelming wave of sadness. Then he turns himself back into a commander and barks at Upham.

MILLER
Let's go, private.

Miller strides away. Upham watches him, trying to figure him out, then he simply follows him.

EXT. HEDGEROW LANE - DAWN

The seven Americans walk along a hedgerow lane, untouched by war. Spreading trees arch gently over the lane which is lined with hedgerows, thick, rooted masses, impenetrable, hundreds of years old.

Miller sees SMOKE AHEAD. He motions to the men. They advance.

EXT. FRENCH FARM - DAY

A burning house and barn. An old FRENCH FARMER kneels on the ground, weeping, next to his SLAUGHTERED FAMILY, two adult women, an adult male and a boy, no more than ten. His animals, a pair of cows and a draft horse and some pigs are dead as well, shot to pieces. A DEAD AMERICAN PARATROOPER lies sprawled in the dirt with empty shell casings around his body.

Miller and his men approach carefully. Miller motions to Upham who squats down next to the French Farmer and speaks gently to him in French.

The FARMER SPEAKS SOFTLY as if in a trance. Upham stands and translates.

UPHAM
Five nights ago, he found this paratrooper caught in a tree with a broken leg. He and his family hid him here. The leg got infected. Last night he went to Ville Cholet to get a doctor. The doctor refused to come and when he got back, this is what he found. The Krauts must have shown up while he was gone.

MILLER
Did he see any sign of them?

Upham gently asks. The FARMER ANSWERS.

UPHAM
No, but he heard firing, just east, less than a kilometer.

MILLER
Thank him and tell him we're sorry about his loss.

Miller heads off without glancing back. The men hesitate. Sarge jerks his head for them move out. They do so.

Upham squats down and speaks softly to the Farmer, puts his hand on the man's shoulder, then rises and follows the others.

EXT. HEDGEROW FIELD - DAY

A beautiful, hedgerow-lined field of tall grass. The last of the dew and morning mist is just burning off.

The six Americans walk carefully through the woods to the edge of the field.

Miller notices something. He silently signals stop, crouches and scans the field and the hedgerow on the far side.

Sarge and Jackson ease up next to him. Jackson points to some trees nearby, freshly shattered and pock-marked with bullets.

Wade calls quietly from a tangle of roots and brush.

WADE
Captain.

Staying low, they join Wade who has found:

TWO DEAD AMERICAN PARATROOPERS

A trail of blood and flattened grass leads from the field.

MILLER, SARGE AND JACKSON

Crawl to the edge of the field, scan the far hedgerow. The others crawl up behind them.

MILLER
Where?

JACKSON
In the shadow by those two trees.

MILLER
My guess, too.

UPHAM
What is it?

MILLER
A machine gun.

Miller eases back from the edge of the field into the cover of the brush. He stands and takes off his pack.

REIBEN
Sir, I've got an idea, let's go around it.

MILLER
We can't leave it here.

JACKSON
We left them eighty-eights.

MILLER
They don't send planes to put out machine guns.
(beat)
Two flank runners with surpressing fire. I'm going right, whoever goes left has to be fast.

Upham steels himself and steps forward.

UPHAM
Sir, I ran the 220 in high school.

REIBEN
He's fast, Captain, I saw him.

Miller takes Upham's measure. Wade laughs with a sneer.

WADE
How fast?

UPHAM
Twenty-four-five.

WADE
Shit, that's nothing, I ran twenty-two flat.

MILLER
Wade goes left.

Wade joins Miller in peeling off his extra gear. Upham is impressed.

UPHAM
Twenty-two flat?

Wade takes a grenade from Upham's chest strap.

WADE
I would have won the states if some bastard hadn't tripped me in the finals.

Miller points the others to their firing positions.

MILLER
Sarge, Upham, here. Jackson, Reiben, ten yards, either side.

As they take their positions, Miller and Sarge speak quietly, out of earshot of the men.

SARGE
Rule of thumb, Captain, says you ought to detail this one, instead of going yourself.

Miller looks at the two dead paratroopers.

MILLER
Yeah? What rule of thumb is that?

SARGE
How about I go right, sir?

MILLER
How about you take your position?

Sarge hesitates.

SARGE
How about...?

MILLER
(interrupting)
How about you shut up and take your position?

Sarge nods.

SARGE
Yes, sir.

Sarge finds a spot. Miller joins Wade. Miller waits near Upham as the other men settle into their firing positions.

UPHAM
Good luck, Captain.

MILLER
Don't need it, I'm a cat, I've got five lives.

UPHAM
The men said, nine.

MILLER
What do they know?
(beat)
I had nine, but I fell through the ice when I was seven, my brother pulled me out. Then I used one when a grenade landed in my foxhole in Sicily, it was a dud.
(more)

MILLER (Cont'd)
I figure one on the beaches, one on the cliffs and two getting here.

UPHAM
That only leaves three.

MILLER
Plenty.

Miller sees that the men are in position. He nods to Wade.

MILLER
Ready?

WADE
Yes, sir.

Miller and Wade take deep breaths.

MILLER
Now.

MILLER AND WADE TAKE OFF AT FULL RUNS.

Onto opposite sides of the field. Nothing happens for a moment. Then:

A HEAVY GERMAN MACHINE GUN OPENS UP. MURDEROUSLY LOUD.

SHATTERING THE QUIET.

IN THE NEST

A squad of Germans, dug deep, BLASTING THE MACHINE GUN, a BIG SCHWARZLOSE 8MM, a stunningly powerful weapon. Four Germans in the nest, four more outlying riflemen.

MILLER

Takes the FIRST FIRE. He HITS THE DIRT. The BULLETS SCREAM just over him.

THE MACHINE GUN SWINGS TOWARD WADE

MILLER JUMPS UP AND SPRINTS

WADE HITS THE DIRT

The BULLETS GRAZE graze the back of his helmet.

SARGE, REIBEN, JACKSON, UPHAM

Zero the machine gun. FIRE fast as they can. Their BULLETS THUD INEFFECTUALLY into the hedgerow.

THE MACHINE GUN SWINGS BACK TOWARD MILLER

WADE JUMPS UP AND SPRINTS

MILLER HITS THE DIRT

Bullets SMASH into the ground all around Miller.

SARGE

FIRES A LONG BURST from his Thompson. No effect. Pissed. POPS THE CLIP. SLAMS in another. FIRES.

THE MACHINE GUN SWINGS FROM MILLER

He rises and runs. Fast. Almost to the far hedgerow.

WADE

Ten more yards. Too slow. A deadly row BULLETS KICK UP DIRT toward him.

MILLER

Makes it to the far side. Scrambles up the roots. Dives through the brush.

WADE

On a slight rise. Can't hit the dirt. A line of bullets. Desperately sprints.

WADE IS HIT. HEAVY BULLETS RIP APART HIS BELLY. He spins. Goes down.

SARGE, UPHAM AND THE OTHERS are horrified. FIRE at the nest.

MILLER

STRUGGLES through the hedgerow. Stumbles onto the path. Rolls to his feet, running. Swings his Thompson into firing position. Racing toward the nest.

SARGE AND THE OTHERS POUR FIRE at the nest.

MILLER

Tearing along the path. Sees a German rifleman. FIRES A BURST. CUTS HIM DOWN. Runs over the body without breaking stride.

SARGE STEPS INTO THE OPEN, INTENTIONALLY DRAWING THE GERMAN FIRE from Miller.

The GERMANS ZERO SARGE. BULLETS THUD all around him. Somehow he's not hit.

MILLER

TEARS THROUGH THE TREES. BLASTS his Thompson. CUTS DOWN two more German riflemen. Grabs a grenade. Pulls the pin.

THE NEST

The Germans see Miller coming. Wheel from Sarge. Too late.

MILLER

THROWS the grenade, VEERS and DIVES.

THE GRENADE EXPLODES

The four Germans in the nest are KILLED.

SARGE hollars to the others.

SARGE
HOLD YOUR FIRE!

MILLER

Rolls to his feet. FIRES another BURST. KILLS the last of the German riflemen. Doesn't pause. RUNS onto the field.

SARGE AND THE OTHERS

See Miller running toward Wade. They instantly RACE onto the field.

WADE

Lies in the grass. Holding his belly. Astonished by the pain.

ALL THE AMERICANS RUN

Converging on Wade. Miller points, and yells, without slowing down.

MILLER
REIBEN, UPHAM, PERIMETER! COVER!

REIBEN AND UPHAM

Stop instantly. Turn toward the perimeter of the field.

SARGE

Roots through his medical kit as he runs. Dropping and scattering inessentials behind him.

WADE

Wide-eyed. Not even writhing. Too much pain.

MILLER AND SARGE GET TO WADE

Throw themselve onto the ground next to him. They both tear out sulfa-packs. Sarge frantically fumbles. Ripping one open. Powder spills.

REIBEN AND UPHAM repeatedly glance back at Wade.

SARGE

Pulls Wade's hands from the wound. Pours sulfa powder.

MILLER

About to pour his sulfa. Sees the wound. Stops. Knows it's fatal.

MILLER
Damn it!

Throws the sulfa aside. Quickly pulls out a morphine pack.

SARGE

Fumbles with a second sulfa bag.

SARGE
Sulfa, more sulfa...

WADE

Frozen in agony. Looks at Miller. Sees him preparing the morphine shot. They both know.

WADE
Yeah...morphine...make it a double...huh...Captain...?

MILLER

SHOVES THE NEEDLE into Wade's neck. Thick vein. Pumps the morphine straight to Wade's brain. Motions impatiently to Sarge.

MILLER
More morphine, hurry up, come on, come on...

SARGE

Hesitates. Then drops his sulfa. Fumbles in his pack. Finds the morphine.

MILLER

Snatches the morphine from Sarge. Quickly and efficiently prepares a second shot. He's done this before.

REIBEN

On guard, glancing back. Pissed off.

REIBEN
Goddamn it...Goddamn it...Goddamn it...

UPHAM

Freaked out. Trying to keep his eyes on the perimeter. Can't.

JACKSON

Watching.

MILLER

Gives Wade the second shot.

WADE

Feels the effects of the first shot. He sees Upham and manages a pained smile.

WADE LOCKS EYES WITH MILLER. Looking at him without blame, without forgiveness. Drifts with the morphine. Then:

WADE DIES

ALL ARE FROZEN IN PLACE

UPHAM begins to weep.

REIBEN furiously mutters:

REIBEN
Goddamn it...Goddamn it...Goddamn it...

MILLER

Is silent. Motionless. He gently closes Wade's eyes. His hand quivers slightly as he unclips one Wades dogtags. He fumbles and drops it. Sarge notices.

Miller stares at his hand and steadies it before the men see. He picks up the dogtag and pockets it.

Then Miller carefully re-packs the un-used morphine and sulfa, rises and picks up his Thompson.

Upham shakes his head.

UPHAM
That was no twenty-two flat.

Miller SLAMS A FRESH CLIP into his Thompson.

MILLER
He lied. Let's move out.

Miller turns and walks away without looking back. The men hesitate, then slowly follow him.

EXT. FRENCH COUNTRY COW PATH - DAY

A narrow footpath, arched over by trees, almost a tunnel. The five G.I.'s walk, spread out.

REIBEN
Fuck Private James Ryan, fuck him, just fuck the goddamned son-of-a-bitch.

JACKSON
Shut up, will you?

REIBEN
You shut up, this is the most fucked up mission I ever heard of. Goddamned Ryan, fuck the little bastard.

JACKSON
Just shut up, Ryan didn't kill Wade.

REIBEN
The hell he didn't.

Miller motions to them curtly.

MILLER
Keep it down.

They shut up. Miller falls in next to Sarge. Speaks quietly, the men don't hear.

MILLER
We've got to find someplace to hole up for a bit.

Sarge looks at Miller closely.

SARGE
You alright?

MILLER
Let's just find someplace.

EXT. NARROW GULLY - DAY

Miller leads the men into a heavily overgrown gully. A good hiding place.

MILLER
Rest. One hour. Jackson, Reiben, perimeter. Keep your eyes open. I'm going to re-con.

Miller speaks authoritatively and says the right things, but there's something missing. It's subtle. Only Sarge notices. He watches Miller head off into the brush alone.

EXT. SMALL CLEARING - DAY

Miller walks into a small clearing, slows then stops. The life drains from him. He stands there, looking at the dirt, tilting his head, this way and that, as if listening for faint, distant voices. His face shows a battle raging within, as he fights to keep from losing it entirely.

Behind him, Sarge steps to the edge of the clearing and watches. Miller senses his presence, turns and looks at him as if he were a thousand miles away. Sarge sits down on a log and waits.

MILLER
What was the name of that kid at Anzio, the one who got his face burned off?

SARGE
Vecchio.

MILLER
Yeah, Vecchio, I couldn't remember his name, he was a good kid, remember how he used to walk on his hands and sing that song about the man on flying trapeze?

SARGE
Yeah.

MILLER
You know why I'm such a good officer? Because of my mother. Have I ever told you about my her?

SARGE
Bits and pieces.

MILLER
She's the best poker player you ever saw.
(more)

MILLER (Cont'd)
My father used to go to these Saturday night games and lose his shirt. Finally, my mother gave him an ultimatum, either she gets a regular seat at the table or she locks him in every Saturday night. He squawked and so did his buddies but after a while they gave in and from the first night she sat down, she never lost. She could read those cocky bastards like they were playing open hands. And her bluffs? She had sixteen levels of bullshit. Her eyes, the tone of her voice, her bets, her jokes, the way she sipped her coffee, she was a master. She won more money on shit hands than anyone in the history of the game. Every Saturday night, my father would lose two, three hundred bucks and she'd win it all back and then some. And I'd stand there, glued to her shoulder, from the time I was five years old, watching every hand, every move, studying how she did it.
(beat)
That's why I'm such a good officer, I can look at a man's face and tell you exactly what he's holding, and if it's a shit hand, I know just what cards to deal him.

SARGE
And what about your own hand?

MILLER
No problem. A pair of deuces? Less? So what? I bluff. It used to tear me apart when I'd get one of my men killed, but what was I supposed to do? Break down in front of the ones who where standing there waiting for me to tell them what to do? Of course not, so I bluffed, and after a while, I started to fall for my own bluff. It was great, it made everything so much easier.

SARGE
Is that why your hand's been shaking?

MILLER
It could be worse. You know the first thing they teach you at O.C.S.? Lie to your men.

SARGE
Oh, yeah?

MILLER
Not in so many words, but they tell you you can have all the firepower in the world and if your men don't have good morale, it's not worth a damn. So if you're scared or empty or half-a-step from a Section Eight, do you tell your men? Of course not. You bluff, you lie.

SARGE
And how do you bluff yourself?

MILLER
Simple, numbers. Every time you kill one of your men, you tell yourself you just saved the lives of two, three, ten, a hundred others. We lost, what, thirty-one on the cliffs? I'll bet we saved ten times that number by putting out those guns. That's over three hundred men. Maybe five hundred. A thousand. Ten thousand. Any number you want. See? It's simple. It lets you always choose mission over men.

SARGE
Except this time, the mission <u>is</u> a man.

MILLER
That's the rub. I liked Wade. Who's Ryan? If they're both standing in front of me and I have to shoot one or the other, how do I choose? Look at my hand, there it goes again.

SARGE
John, I've got to tell you, I think you're about used up.

MILLER
I think you're right, Keith.

SARGE
You want me to take over?

The question helps Miller pull himself back together. He looks at his hand and forces it to stop shaking again.

MILLER
No, but if I get any worse, you'll have to relieve me.

SARGE
(sighs)
Just what I want to do.

They share a smile.

MILLER
You know Wade was the eleventh of the twelve, you're the last one still alive.

SARGE
I know.

MILLER
Don't let yourself get killed, if you do, they might make me give back the medal and then I won't be able to lip off to colonels anymore.

SARGE
I'll do my best.

They shake their heads at the madness of it all.

MILLER
Hell of a...
(beat)
Ah, forget it.

Miller picks up his Thompson and looks around, re-orienting himself. He's about ninety-five percent there.

MILLER
Thanks for drawing that machine gun off me.

SARGE
You're welcome, John.

MILLER
But, that's my personal brand of stupidity, I feel kind of proprietary about it, if you do it again, you're busted.

Sarge allows himself a slight smile.

SARGE
Yes, sir.

Miller jerks his head for Sarge to follow. They head back to the men.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

The men are all in their private worlds, thinking of Wade. No talk. Miller and Sarge walk back into the clearing. Miller barks at the men.

MILLER
Up. We're moving out.

REIBEN
I thought you said we had an hour, sir?

MILLER
Well now I'm saying we're moving out. Get off your ass.

The men get up. Jackson is a bit slow.

MILLER
What the hell's the matter with you, Jackson?

JACKSON
Sir, I ain't feeling so chipper on account of Wade.

MILLER
Who's Wade?

No one responds.

MILLER
I said, who the hell is Wade?

The men exchange looks. Jackson speaks for them.

JACKSON
Sir, I understand what you're doin', but I respectfully request permission to grieve in my own manner.

MILLER
You'll grieve the way I tell you to goddamned grieve.
(more)

MILLER (Cont'd)
There is no Wade, there was one but he died a long time ago, he's been dead for so long you can hardly remember his name, you understand?

JACKSON
Sir, I understand. I don't like it, but I understand.

MILLER
Good, now get your goddamned gear.

The men pick up their equipment and prepare to move out. Sarge and Miller exchange a silent look. Miller shakes his head to himself, amazed that the men still allow this shit to work. He knows they have no choice.

EXT. FRENCH ROAD - DAY

Miller and his men walk along the road. The men are silent, grim.

EXT. FRENCH PATH - DAY

Miller checks his map. Figures out where they are. Folds up the map, points the way and they move out.

EXT. FRENCH FIELD - DAY

More progress. The men are still grim.

REIBEN
You know what the best possible thing that could happen is?

JACKSON
Yep, you step on a rusty nail, get lockjaw, never say another word as long as you live.

Miller laughs.

MILLER
I'll bite, Reiben.

REIBEN
I've given this a lot of thought, sir. The best thing that could happen is, we find Ryan and he's dead.

MILLER
Why's that?

REIBEN
Well, sir, consider the possibilities. A: Ryan is alive. We have to take him back to the beach. Knowing you, you don't let him carry my gear, even though he really should, and we all get killed, trying to keep him alive.

MILLER
Except for the last part, that one's not bad.

REIBEN
B: Ryan is dead. He's been blown up by the German equivalent of Wade, whose name I know you don't want me to mention. There's nothing to find. The biggest piece is the size of a pea. We wander around, looking for him until the Germans pick us off, one after another.

MILLER
I don't like that one.

REIBEN
Neither do I, sir. C: And this is the worst one, we find Ryan and he's wounded. Not only does he not carry my gear, we have to carry his gear. And him.

MILLER
But we accomplish the mission.

REIBEN
Maybe. But what if he dies on the way back? You see what I'm saying, sir? The best possible situation is, he's dead, we find his body, more or less intact, we grab one of his dog-tags and high-tail it back to the beach, or better yet, we head over to Caen and catch up with division.

MILLER
Has anyone ever told you, you're officer material?

REIBEN
No, sir.

MILLER
That's a mystery to me.

No one smiles, but they trudge a bit less.

EXT. CROSSROADS - DAY

The SOUND OF HEAVY FIRING. Miller checks a map in the brush near the crossroads. A sign reads: "Ramelle 3 Km." Miller folds up the map.

SARGE
Looks like we're going to beat those Kraut companies to Ramelle.

Suddenly Miller stops dead. He listens, hearing something the others don't hear. He motions for them to freeze, they do. The SOUND grows louder. It's an OMINOUS RUMBLE.

MILLER
I don't think so.

EXT. FRENCH ROAD - DAY

THE RUMBLE turns into the ROAR OF A BIG GERMAN CONVOY. Troop trucks, armored personel carriers, a regiment of crack Wehrmacht troops. Heavily armed. Imposing. Crossing a bridge.

CAMERA PANS DOWN TO REVEAL

Miller and his men crowded into a culvert under the bridge. Brush and debris partially shield the ends of the culvert.

GERMAN FLANK SQUADS

Hurry along the fields on either side of the road, trying to keep up with the vehicles.

MILLER AND HIS MEN

Catch a glimpse of an approaching German Flank Squad. They flatten themselves into the mucky water. Ready their weapons. Prepare to fire.

THE GERMAN SQUAD

Approaches the bridge.

A PAIR OF GERMAN PRIVATES

See the culvert obscured by brush. Move to check it out.

MILLER

Is just about to open up on them.

THE GERMAN SERGEANT

Sees his Flank Squad lagging behind and CALLS to them.

THE GERMAN PRIVATES

Obey. Hurry after the rest of the convoy.

IN THE CULVERT

The American breathe again.

UPHAM
I wonder where they're going.

MILLER
Same place we are.

Jackson, at the mouth of the culvert, motions that the coast is clear. They head out.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF RAMELLE - DAY

A gently-sloped valley with scattered farm cottages and small, cultivated fields, bordered by ancient, moss-covered stone walls. The town is visible beyond.

Miller and his men crouch-run to the cover of one of the stone walls. Miller pulls out his binoculars.

ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE FIELD

There's a large gathering of German troops and vehicles.

MILLER

Scans the Germans with his binoculars.

REIBEN
Looks like tea time, maybe they're Brits.

UPHAM
I sure hope so.

SARGE
What do you think they're waiting for, Captain?

Just then they hear an OMINOUS RUMBLE, deeper and more threatening that that of the convoy. The sound gets LOUDER and LOUDER. Miller and his men exchange looks. They know that sound, they don't like it.

FOUR MASSIVE GERMAN TANKS

Appear down the road, heading for the German soldiers who greet them enthusiastically. The tanks are Tigers, huge, far bigger than an American Sherman. Each one, sixty-two tons, with a big 88-mm gun, four heavy machine guns and impregnable armor. Each one, an infantryman's nightmare. There are four of them.

MILLER

Puts away the binoculars and jerks his head for his men to follow, low, along the wall. The men are happy to do so, looking back nervously at the German tanks.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - RAMELLE - DAY

The SOUNDS OF SPORADIC SMALL ARMS FIRE. The town square is a deserted battlefield, littered with burning debris, shell casings and and bodies, German and American and a few French civilians.

Miller and his men enter the square, weapons ready, leap-frogging from doorway to doorway.

Miller and Sarge crouch-run to the cover of some overhanging debris. They listen, trying to pinpoint the exact source of the firing.

Sarge motions his guess. Miller nods in agreement. He signals for the men to follow him around, not toward, the firing.

They move on, dashing from cover to cover.

EXT. BRIDGE - RAMELLE - DAY

A dozen AMERICAN PARATROOPERS on the bridge exchange SPORADIC FIRE with a few German snipers hidden in the buildings near the bridgehead.

The bridge has clearly been the scene of heavy fighting. Craters, burning debris and shell casings are everywhere The bridge is intact, only slightly damaged. There are dozens of German bodies on the street leading up to the bridge and more German bodies along the riverbank on both sides of the bridgehead.

MILLER AND HIS MEN

Crouch-run and take cover as they get within sight of the bridge.

REIBEN
Looks like they've been having a hell of a party, here, Captain.

MILLER
ON THE BRIDGE! WE'RE COMING IN!

A YOUNG BUT GRIZZLED VOICE calls back.

VOICE FROM BRIDGE
KISS MY ASS, FRITZ.

MILLER
YOU FIRE AT US AND I'LL DO A HELL OF A LOT MORE THAN THAT.

VOICE FROM BRIDGE
WHO WON THE '38 ARMY-NAVY GAME?

Miller turns to his men. They all come up empty.

MILLER
I HAVE NO FUCKING IDEA. HERE WE COME.
(to his men)
Cover me.

REIBEN
What if our guys open up, sir?

MILLER
You're only allowed to shoot at Germans, that's one of the rules.

REIBEN
Have it your way, Captain.

Miller takes a breath, then DASHES out into the open, toward the bridge.

THE GERMAN SNIPERS OPEN UP

Bullets SMASH INTO THE GROUND around Miller.

MILLER'S MEN

POUR FIRE at the German positions, SURPRESSING THE GERMAN FIRE.

ON THE BRIDGE

The Paratroopers pour a HEAVY STREAM OF BULLETS at the German positions.

Miller makes it to the bridge and DIVES over a defensive jumble of crates, sandbags and bodies.

He finds himself next to SERGEANT BILL FORREST who was the young but grizzled voice that called out. With Forrest are some very worn-out, young AMERICAN PARATROOPERS. Miller catches his breath.

FORREST
Navy, sir, twenty-one to nineteen. They won on a field goal in overtime.

MILLER
I'll keep it in mind.
(calls to Sarge)
OKAY, SARGE, ONE AT A TIME.

Miller and the paratroopers FIRE COVER for Miller's men as they come in. Miller and Forrest alternately talk and FIRE.

FORREST
Are we glad to see you, sir, we were supposed to hold this bridge for twenty-four hours, it's been six days.

MILLER
Things are tough all over. We're looking for a Private James Ryan.

FORREST
Ryan?

MILLER
Is he here?

Forrest motions to one of the paratroopers.

FORREST
Go get Ryan.
(to Miller)
What do you want him for, sir?

Miller doesn't answer. Jackson leaps over the barricade and scrambles to them.

MILLER
Jackson, get a hold of command.

Jackson cranks up the five-thirty-five. Miller turns to Forrest.

MILLER
How many men do you have?

They pause to FIRE, covering Sarge, the last of Miller's men to leap over the barricade.

FORREST
Eleven, sir. We started with thirty-six. The bridge was easy to take but the Krauts have been coming back at us ever since.
(more)

FORREST (Cont'd)
They must want it intact or we'd be long gone.

Jackson speaks into the radio handset, repeating Miller's hailing I.D. No response.

JACKSON
Not yet.

MILLER
Keep trying.

FORREST
Sir, what do you want with Ryan?

Miller doesn't answer, he looks past Forrest and sees:

PRIVATE JAMES RYAN

Dashing from cover to cover, making his way toward them. Ryan is an American classic, nineteen years old, earthy, handsome, sharp, cocky. Though he's exhausted, unshaven, and smeared with dirt and blood, he's very alive. His eyes shine, his face has a spark. You can't help but love this kid.

MILLER'S MEN

All watch Ryan run toward them.

JACKSON
So, that's Ryan.

REIBEN
Looks like a flaming asshole to me.

Their eyes remain glued to Ryan as he makes it to the barricade. He salutes Miller.

REIBEN
I'm Ryan, sir. You wanted to see me?

Miller looks at Ryan for a moment, amazed that he's finally face-to-face with him. Ryan waits. Miller hesitates, searching for words. Then he speaks gently but clearly.

MILLER
Private, I've got some bad news for you. Your brothers have been killed in action.

The life instantly drains from Ryan. His breath comes hard. Somehow he remains upright.

RYAN
All three?

MILLER
Yes.

Ryan sways, Miller grabs him and eases him back, leaning him against some sandbags.

THE PARATROOPERS

Are stunned at the news. They look at Ryan, there's nothing else they can do.

MILLER'S MEN

Also look at Ryan, but then, one after another, they turn away, averting their eyes, looking at the their boots, the debris on the bridge, the sky, anything other than Ryan.

MILLER
We've been sent to get you out of here. You're going home.

Ryan weakly waves Miller off. Miller motions to his men and the paratroopers to move away. They do so, giving Ryan a little room.

FORREST
Three brothers, the poor son-of-a-bitch.

MILLER
Sergeant, we're moving out and I'm taking you and your men with me.

FORREST
But, sir, our orders are clear, we're to hold this bridge until we're relieved by forward elements of the Twenty-ninth Division.

MILLER
I'm giving you new orders, Sergeant.

FORREST
Sir, you can't do that, these orders are from command.

MILLER
I'm not going to leave you and your men here to get killed. Get them together, we're moving out.

A VOICE from behind them speaks simply, clearly, firmly.

RYAN (O.S.)
No, sir.

They all turn and see Ryan standing there. Miller is about to automatically rip Ryan a new asshole for contradicting him, but he quickly calms himself, gently touches Ryan on the arm and speaks softly to him.

MILLER
Come on, Private, you're going home.

Ryan jerks away from Miller.

RYAN
No, sir.

All eyes are on Miller and Ryan. Miller remains patient.

MILLER
Private, I'm sorry about your brothers but staying here and geting yourself killed isn't going to help.

RYAN
Sir, if the Krauts are holding this bridge when division shows up, our guys are going to be sitting ducks.

MILLER
This bridge cannot be held. The Germans have two companies less than three miles from here. They have tanks.

That news clearly affects Ryan and the other paratroopers, but Ryan holds his ground.

RYAN
Sir, I'm still not going.

Miller speaks with restrained, but growing, anger.

MILLER
Private, if you want to commit suicide, that's your choice, but you're going to have to wait until after I get you back to the beach. And you're not going to take these men with you.

Ryan stands eye-to-eye with Miller.

RYAN
I'm not leaving, sir.

Miller starts to boil over.

MILLER
The hell you aren't, you're coming with me if I have to drag you every inch of the way. You hear me, Private?

REIBEN
I hear you sir, but I'm not leaving.

Miller grabs Ryan by the lapels and shakes him. Ryan doesn't resist.

MILLER
Listen you little son-of-a-bitch you're coming with me or I'll...I'll...

Ryan speaks softly.

RYAN
What are you going to do, sir, shoot me?

Miller considers it. Then REIBEN SPEAKS UP from behind Miller.

REIBEN
(politely)
Uh, excuse me, Captain?

Miller slowly turns and glares.

REIBEN
(continuing)
So, what are a few tanks, sir?

Miller's more amazed than pissed off. Reiben smiles.

REIBEN
(continuing)
He's right, we can't shoot him...well, we could but we'd get in an enormous amount of trouble. And he's right about the bridge, it's a hell of a lot more important than he is.

JACKSON STEPS FORWARD.

JACKSON
Cap'n...?

Miller turns his glare on Jackson.

JACKSON
(continuing)
Seems to me, we got us a opportunity, here, to kill two birds with one stone. Command seems to think keepin' this boy alive is worth somethin'. If we was to do that and hold this bridge, good chance we'd get us a bucket full of medals. I might even get me one 'a them big, fancy ones like you got, so's I could sass any officer in the whole dang army, you included.

Miller does a slow burn.

UPHAM STEPS FORWARD

UPHAM
I'd like to stay, too, Captain.

MILLER
You don't count.

SARGE STEPS UP

SARGE
I do and personally, I'd rather get the hell out of here, but somebody's got to stay and take care of you and these pin-head privates of yours.

Miller looks at FORREST AND THE PARATROOPERS.

FORREST
We weren't planning on going anywhere, sir.

Reiben smiles.

REIBEN
See, Captain? The vote's unanimous.

Miller's eyes almost pop out of his head.

MILLER
The vote? What the hell are you talking about? We don't vote. This isn't a democracy. This is the army, I give orders, you follow them. We don't vote!

REIBEN
Yes, sir, of course, sir, I was merely speaking hypothetically. If this was a voting situation, then the vote would have been unanimous. But of course, it's not a voting situation, you're the captain, and you give the orders, sir.

MILLER
You're goddamned right, I give the orders. Vote! Jesus Christ! Listen to me, you little pissant pieces of shit, I am the ranking officer here and what I say goes, is that clear?

They all quickly nod.

JACKSON
Yes, sir.

REIBEN
Of course, sir.

ALL THE OTHERS
Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

Miller looks from face to face.

MILLER
In that case...
(beat)
I vote we stay.

That's what they wanted to hear. Miller doesn't give them time to enjoy it, he immediately starts barking orders.

MILLER
Reiben, the B.A.R., there. Jackson, get up on the bridgekeepers hut with your sniper rifle. Sarge, you and Upham move that machine gun so it can cover the left flank, it's worthless where it is. Forrest, I want a full inventory of all your weapons, ammo and ordnance. Go.

They all hurry off, except for Ryan who locks eyes with Miller for a moment.

RYAN
Thank you, sir.

MILLER
(gruffly gentle)
Yeah, yeah. I want you right next to me, no matter where I go, you understand?

Ryan salutes.

RYAN
Yes, sir.

MILLER
Alright, come with me.

Miller shakes his head at himself and strides off to check the defensive perimeter with Ryan at his side.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

Miller and Reiben watch as Forrest, Ryan and a couple other paratroopers lay out their weapons and ammo inventory.

FORREST
Two machine guns, twenty-two grenades, two Gammon grenades, six satchel charges, twenty-six M-1's, eight Tommy guns and about about sixty rounds per man.

MILLER
That's it?

Reiben looks at the sparse array of weaponry.

REIBEN
Sir, can I change my vote?

Miller sighs, worried.

EXT. BRIDGEKEEPER'S HUT - DAY

Jackson, perched on the bridgekeepers hut, protected by a crescent of sandbags. His eye is at his scope. He FIRES.

A GERMAN SNIPER

Falls from a window on the edge of town, dead.

UPHAM

Sits beside Jackson with a pair of binoculars, searching for another target. The German sniper fire has subsided for now.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

Miller watches as Ryan and several other paratroopers dig a series of trenches across the street, leading to the bridge.

Reiben, Jackson and Upham, stone-faced, watch Ryan.

Miller eyes the buildings near the bridge head. He speaks to Sarge who holds several satchel charges.

MILLER
Sarge, see what you can to do make those buildings inhospitable.

SARGE
Yes, sir.

Just then they hear the sound of A BIG GUN FIRING IN THE DISTANCE. They all turn at the sound.

UPHAM
Eighty-eights, right?

Miller nods.

UPHAM
I can't tell what the gunners had for dinner.

MILLER
Those guns are close.

FORREST
Just south of town. The Krauts have a two gun emplacement, we saw it on the way in. That's how we knew they wanted the bridge intact, they didn't blow the crap out of us.

MILLER
Let's hope they don't change their mind.

Upham listens to the eighty-eights with particular interest.

INT. BUILDING - DAY

Within sight of the bridge. Sarge carefully plants a wire-triggered satchel charge at the door of the building. He sets the wire, then carefully backs away.

EXT. BRIDGE - EVENING

Reiben and Ryan pile sandbags, finishing a forward machine gun nest. Miller looks around, evaluating, Sarge and Upham at his side.

SARGE
What do you think?

MILLER
Well, if we had ten times the men and a lot more ammo, we might stand a chance, but not against those tanks.

SARGE
What are we going to do?

MILLER
We're going to hope like hell the tanks were on their way somewhere else.

REIBEN
Maybe Caen.

MILLER
Let's hope, because we're sure as hell not going to do any damage to them with what we have here.

UPHAM
What about our grenades?

MILLER
Those are Tigers, they have six-inch armor, they don't even notice grenades.

UPHAM
Would they notice an eighty-eight?

MILLER
Sure, you got one?

UPHAM
The Germans do.

Miller is stone-faced, then he smiles.

MILLER
Upham, go find Jackson, he and I are going hunting.

Upham runs off. Sarge shakes his head.

SARGE
Uh, oh.

MILLER
Out of the mouths of babes.

EXT. BRIDGEHEAD - NIGHT

Dark. Miller, Jackson and Forrest darken their faces with blackening soot. The rest of Miller's men and several paratroopers, including Ryan, look on. Upham is distressed.

UPHAM
It was my idea, sir, you've got to let me go.

MILLER
Upham, you've got to learn the difference between whining and griping. You can't just rely on natural ability, you've got to study and practice.

UPHAM
But, sir...

MILLER
There you go again, that's whining, that's not okay.

UPHAM
Goddamn it, sir...

MILLER
That's better, but you've still got a long way to go. Talk to Reiben, he's a natural and and works at it, he'll give you some pointers.

REIBEN
Leave him to me, Captain, I'll have him pissing and moaning with the best of us.

MILLER
See to it.

RYAN steps up to Miller.

RYAN
I'd like to go, sir.

MILLER
No, private, I want you to stay here, keep your head down, don't do anything brave or stupid.

REIBEN
Aren't they the same thing, sir?

Miller smiles.

MILLER
Reiben, I don't know what I'd do without you. Sarge, keep Ryan close to you and alive.

SARGE
Yes, sir.

Miller checks Jackson and Forrest.

MILLER
You ready?

FORREST
Yes, sir.

JACKSON
You betcha, sir.

Miller, Forrest and Jackson prepare to move out.

REIBEN
(southern accent)
Y'all come back.

JACKSON
Reiben, are you makin' fun 'a the way I talk?

REIBEN
(heavy southern accent)
Hell, no!

Jackson shoots him a glare, then he follows Miller and Forrest into the darkness. Sarge, Ryan and the others watch them go.

EXT. GERMAN EIGHTY-EIGHT EMPLACEMENT - NIGHT

A German eighty-eight FIRES, sending its big shell into the night. It's eight-man crew re-loads.

IN THE DARKNESS

A slight movement. It's Miller. He crawls to the edge of the emplacement and freezes in the shadows.

A moment later he's joined by Forrest. A moment after that, Jackson silently crawls up to them.

MILLER

Eyes the emplacement. Looks for a weakness. There is none. He motions to Forrest and Jackson to wait. The three of them settle into the darkness.

EXT. MACHINE GUN NEST - BRIDGE - NIGHT

Sarge, Upham and Reiben sit with Jackson in the darkness. Ryan is lost is thought, far away. One after another, Miller's men eye him.

SARGE
Private, I'm sorry about your brothers.

Ryan nods. Then, with some difficulty, he makes the trip from Iowa back to France. He turns to Sarge.

RYAN
What was the name of the guy who got killed coming up here?

SARGE
Wade.

RYAN
Wade. Huh, he died coming up here to keep me alive...I never met him...he didn't know me from Adam, strange. What was he like?

SARGE
A good man, kind of cheerful, Reiben, here, used to call him a happy idiot.

REIBEN
Like hell, I did.

RYAN
My brothers would be mighty pissed off at me, if they knew I let some guy get killed trying to keep me alive.

SARGE
You didn't let anybody get killed, you didn't even know we were coming up here.

RYAN
Sure, I know, but...
(sighs)
Goddamn it all...

The others nod in agreement. They look closely at Ryan.

EXT. GERMAN EIGHTY-EIGHT EMPLACEMENT - NIGHT

Dark. No firing. Two German soldiers on watch.

A SHADOW

It's Miller. Easing through the darkness. Closer to one of the sentries.

Miller sees Jackson easing up behind another sentry. Miller nods to Jackson. They move at the same moment. Behind the sentries. SLIT THEIR THROATS.

BEHIND THE EIGHTY-EIGHT

Forrest removes the wheel-blocks.

A GERMAN SENTRY

Approaches. He sees Forrest. Just as he's about to open up with his sub-machine gun, Miller grabs him behind, STABS him, eases the body silently to the ground.

MILLER AND JACKSON

Join Forrest at the eighty-eight.

Together they attach the eighty-eight's carriage to the Germans truck.

ANOTHER GERMAN SENTRY

Rounds a corner. Sees them. OPENS UP WITH HIS SUB-MACHINE GUN.

Forrest DIVES, FIRES BACK.

OTHER GERMANS

Race over, FIRING.

JACKSON

Covering them, OPENS UP. Kills the advancing Germans.

MILLER frantically attaches the eighty-eight to the truck.

FORREST CUTS DOWN, several more Germans.

JACKSON TAKES A GRAZING SHOT IN THE SHOULDER.

Spins.

Still FIRING.

Giving Miller cover.

MILLER LEAPS into the cab of the truck.

JACKSON AND FORREST LEAP into the back.

JACKSON FIRES into the approaching Germans.

THE WINDSHIELD

Is shattered by bullets.

Glass flies everywhere, cutting Miller on the face and hands.

FORREST

In the back of the truck.

Spraying the Germans with his Thompson.

MILLER FLOORS IT.

The truck DRIVES through the Germans.

The Germans FIRE at the truck and trailing eighty-eight.

MILLER, JACKSON AND FORREST

Drive into the night.

The Germans FIRING after them.

EXT. ROAD LEADING TO THE BRIDGE - NIGHT

Miller, Jackson and Forrest barrel down the road through a gauntlet of Germans. As they approach the bridge, the other American's FIRE COVER for them.

Miller drives the truck onto the bridge.

SMASHES INTO THE SANDBAGS

THE OTHER AMERICANS, with Ryan in the lead, leap over the barricade and drag the captured eighty-eight onto the bridge.

MILLER
RYAN! GET BACK THERE!

Ryan ignores him. They get the eighty-eight safely behind the barricade. Miller grabs Ryan.

RYAN
Sorry, sir.

Miller fumes. He sees Reiben, Sarge and Upham, shrugging, clearly not pissed at Ryan.

MILLER
Don't do that again.

RYAN
I won't need to sir, it's already here, behind the barricade so...

Miller GROWLS.

RYAN
Yes, sir.

Miller glares at Ryan, then strides off.

INT. FIELD - NIGHT

Miller and Upham carefully dig up a German mine. Very gingerly they place it on a growing pile of other mines.

INT. ROAD LEADING TO BRIDGE - NIGHT

Miller and Ryan lay a mine into the dirt. They cover it and step back carefully.

Then they proceed with the next. Upham is covering their tracks while Jackson is digging the holes in which they'll place the rest of the mines.

EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

Quiet. Dark. Everything is ready. There's nothing to do now but wait.

ON THE BRIDGEKEEPERS HUT

Reiben and Jackson sit behind the sandbags. They can see Ryan sitting in the moonlight about twenty yards away, manning the rear machine gun nest with Sarge.

REIBEN
What do you think?

JACKSON
I think I'm glad we got that eighty-eight.

REIBEN
I mean, Ryan, what do you think of him?

Jackson shrugs.

JACKSON
He ain't half-bad, I guess.

REIBEN
I guess.

They're quiet for a moment.

JACKSON
He ain't Wade.

REIBEN
Nope, he ain't Wade.

Their eyes keep coming back to Ryan.

MILLER

Crouch-runs through the shadows and stops at the bridgekeepers hut.

MILLER
Reiben...

Miller points, directing Reiben to the forward machine gun nest.

REIBEN
Yes, sir.

REIBEN jumps down and moves forward.

MILLER runs across the bridge and joins Sarge and Ryan in the rear machine gun nest.

MILLER
You set?

Sarge nods.

RYAN
Yes, sir.

Miller and Sarge exchange a look. Then Miller slips off to check the others.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAWN

First light. The Americans are ready for battle. WE SEE them in their positions:

REIBEN AND UPHAM

Manning the forward machine gun nest.

JACKSON

Behind the sandbags, on top of the bridgekeeper's hut.

FORREST AND THE PARATROOPERS

Behind the second of two barricades set up between the forward and the rear machine gun nests.

RYAN AND SARGE

Manning rear machine gun.

MILLER

At the bridgehead, waiting.

A SOUND FROM DOWN THE ROAD

All eyes turn.

A SINGLE GERMAN SOLDIER

Dashes across the street. Exposed only for an instant. Then another. And another.

MILLER

Cocks his Thompson. Settles down behind some sandbags.

MILLER
HERE THEY COME!

A RUSH OF GERMANS ADVANCE, BLASTING AT THE BRIDGE.

THE AMERICANS RETURN FIRE

REIBEN

OPENS UP with the MACHINE GUN.

THE GERMANS

At least fifty of them, advancing on the bridge. Running from cover to cover. A squad pushing a French truck, using it as a shield.

JACKSON

Calmly picking off the attacking Germans.

THE GERMAN INFANTRYMEN

Make their way down the streets. Along the riverbank. Through the houses. There are GERMANS FIRING from all directions.

REIBEN FIRES IN ARCS.

MILLER

Sees Reiben and Upham being cut off. Grabs the B.A.R., stands and fires.

REIBEN AND UPHAM

Running out of ammo. See that there's nothing else they can do.

REIBEN
Time to go.

Reiben rolls out of the nest, carrying the fifty caliber. Upham follows, carrying the ammo boxes. They run as fast as they can.

THE OTHER AMERICANS FIRE COVER

REIBEN takes a glancing slug. Falls. Rolls and gets up. Bleeding from the side, but not mortal. Upham helps him.

They MAKE IT TO THE SANDBAGS of the first barricade.

DIVE OVER. The Germans are almost on them.

RYAN IS FIRING

With the rear MACHINE GUN. Drops several Germans.

GERMANS EVERYWHERE

They swarm over the first barricade.

MILLER

FIRES A BURST into a German's belly. HITS another with the stock of his Thompson.

HAND-TO-HAND.

FORREST AND THE OTHER PARATROOPERS

FIRING COVER for Miller, Reiben and Upham, don't see a flanking German squad easing along the riverbank. Two of the Germans LOB POTATO MASHERS among the paratroopers.

THE PARATROOPERS see the grenades. Too late.

THE POTATO MASHERS EXPLODE

KILING FORREST AND THE OTHER PARATROOPERS

RYAN SEES FORREST AND THE OTHERS DIE

No time to react.

HAND-TO-HAND FIGHTING

Half a dozen Germans break through.

Miller KILLS TWO MORE WITH A BURST.

RYAN

Is jumped on by one. Upham FIRES. KILLS the German.

MILLER

Struggling with a pair of Germans.

JACKSON

FIRES. Drops one of the Germans on Miller with a head shot. Cuts open Miller's face with bits of skull.

RYAN

Leaps onto the final German attacking Miller. That German raises his rifle on Ryan.

UPHAM AND REIBEN AND JACKSON

All see it. SIMULTANEOUSLY SHOOT the German.

THE STUNNED GERMAN

About to kill Ryan. Torn apart by bullets from three directions.

UPHAM
I got him.

REIBEN
Like hell you did, I got him.

JACKSON SMILES

He got him.

MILLER SLAMS in a fresh clip. FIRES an arc. DROPS four Germans. Sees a oncoming RUSH OF GERMANS. BARKS to Reiben and Upham:

MILLER
BACK! LET'S GO!

They retreat, firing back as best they can, trying to make it to the barricade.

SARGE

Sees them in deep trouble. Leaves Ryan firing the rear machine gun. Grabs the B.A.R. ADVANCES, FIRING COVER. Exposed.

BULLETS EVERYWHERE

MILLER, REIBEN, UPHAM make it to the barricade. Dive over.

SARGE

Sees they've made it. FIRES A FINAL BURST. Races for cover. A trail of bullets right behind him.

THE OTHER AMERICANS FIRE for all they're worth. Trying to cover Sarge. Too many Germans.

SARGE TAKES A SHOT IN THE BACK. FALLS. MILLER AND THE OTHERS continue to fire, horrified.

SARGE STRUGGLES TO HIS FEET

Cradling the B.A.R. Stumbling toward cover. Slowing. Bleeding.

THE AMERICANS

Desparately trying to cover him.

THE GERMANS

Open up with a volley.

SARGE

Is almost there.

ALL THE AMERICANS STAND AND FIRE

As best they can. Right past Sarge. It's not enough.

SARGE

Five feet from the sandbags, his back is TORN APART by German fire. He looks down, stunned at his chest. Amazed to see GAPING HOLES. An instant of surprise, more than fear.

He looks to Miller. Takes two more stumbling steps. Falls onto the sandbags. Dropping the B.A.R. over the edge. Dies.

THE AMERICANS FIRE MADLY, CONTINUOUSLY

THE GERMANS

Who killed Sarge are killed. The others back off for now.

REIBEN, UPHAM, JACKSON, RYAN fire at the retreating Germans.

MILLER

Grabs Sarge and pulls him over the barricade. Sees that he's dead.

THE GERMANS RETREAT

Around the corner.

MILLER

Stunned, lays Sarge down, kneeling next to him.

THE OTHERS

Watch, start to gather.

REIBEN
Goddamn it...Goddamn it...Goddamn it....

MILLER
Get back to your positions!

They hesitate.

MILLER
Go!

They follow the order. All except Ryan, who doesn't move. He can't take his eyes off Sarge.

MILLER

Doesn't move. He just stares at Sarge's body.

RYAN

Looks at Miller, sees him growing weak, starting to sway. He gently tries to move Miller aside.

RYAN
I'll take care of Sarge...

Miller looks up at Ryan, then back at Sarge's body. Miller grows cold, making the same startling transformation he made as he kneeled over Wade's body.

MILLER
Sarge? Who's Sarge?

But this time it doesn't work. He can't make it stick. The hard expression, disappears. He drifts, utterly lost. He's called his own bluff.

EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

Dark. Quiet. The distant guns are silent for once.

Waiting. Reiben, Upham, Jackson, Ryan and Miller have tightened their perimeter.

Miller is in a trance. The others glance at him nervously.

They eat in silence. K-rations. Some bread. A last supper.

Then, from out of nowhere, Miller speaks:

MILLER
English teacher, Addley, Pennsylvania.

Slowly, Miller's men turn to him.

UPHAM
What'd you say, Captain?

MILLER
I teach English at Addley High School in Addley, Pennsylvania.

REIBEN
Well, I'll be goddamned, I knew it.

JACKSON
Like hell, you did.

UPHAM
Captain, what about our deal?

MILLER
I changed my mind.

REIBEN
What deal?

MILLER
I coach the baseball team, too.

JACKSON
No kiddin'?

REIBEN
What deal?

UPHAM
Forget it.

They all sit in silence.

MILLER
You know that that cruise ship Wade's grandfather was on?

They all nod, except Ryan who doesn't know what Miller's talking about.

MILLER
(continuing)
I wonder if his cabin is still available?

REIBEN
That's not where I am.

MILLER
No? Where are you?

REIBEN
I'm in a dressing room with Mrs. Rachel Troubowitz, our super's wife. She's an easy forty-four, double E, but I've convinced her she's a thirty-eight D and I'm watching her try and squeeze herself into a side-stay, silk-ribboned, three-panel girdle with shelf-lift brassiere.
(smiles)
She's having a devil of a time, getting into that thing.

They all share Reiben's dream for a moment. Then Jackson smiles.

JACKSON
Me? I'm walking with my hound, Lucy, it's about an hour 'fore sunrise and we're out huntin' coon. I got me a flask of pure Kentucky mash whiskey...

REIBEN
Jackson, how many times I got to tell you, you're from Tennessee.

JACKSON
I am, but I like imported whiskey. So there I am and I hear the biggest ole' coon you ever did hear, 'a rustlin' right there in front of me. That ole' boy comes right out of the brush, I got a clear shot and he knows he's 'bout to meet his maker. I aim, I got my finger tight on the trigger and then I just smile and say to that ole' coon, go on, now, you get out 'a here. Then I sit down on a hollow log and take me a right long pull a' that mash whiskey.

Upham smiles.

UPHAM
I don't know, I kind of like Wade's idea about the cruise ship. I've never been to Tahiti.

REIBEN
What about you, Captain?

Miller smiles. He knows exactly where he is.

MILLER
I'm my backyard, lying in my hammock, with my arm around my wife, listening for the sound of breaking glass.

JACKSON
Say what, Cap'n?

MILLER
You see, I've got the best house in all of Addley. It's not the biggest house, but it's got the best location, right next to the junior high baseball field. The garage windows face left field. The guy who owned the house before me had these heavy screens put over them. The first thing I did when I bought the place was take off those screens. Two-hundred-twenty-two yards from home plate to my garage windows. It takes a hell of a junior high kid to hit a ball that far.
(more)

MILLER (Cont'd)
I look at my garage windows as a motivator and a way to scout the kids coming up, the ones who are going to give us a shot at the state championship. I lay there in my hammock and every time I hear the sound of breaking glass, I know we're one step closer to winning it all.

JACKSON
Don't that get kind of expensive, Cap'n?

MILLER
It's worth it.

JACKSON
To each, his own.

They're all silent for a moment. Then Miller turns to Ryan.

MILLER
How about you, James?

Ryan sighs.

RYAN
I'm home, playing basketball with my brothers, it's evenin' time, we're tryin' to get in a few more points before it's too dark to see the ball. That's where I am.

They all nod. Miller tears off a piece of bread and passes it to Ryan who tears off a bit and passes it on. They all eat in silence.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF RAMELLE - DAWN

First light. Lovely. Dew shimmers. A ground fog drifts. A SOUND. Louder. And louder. A GERMAN TIGER TANK RUMBLES toward the village.

EXT. BRIDGE - RAMELLE - DAWN

All are awake. At their positions. Waiting.

MILLER

Hears the FAINT DISTANT RUMBLE OF THE TANK. Barely has time to react. Sees:

THE GERMANS ADVANCING AGAIN

MILLER
Here they come.

REIBEN

FIRES a burst. Germans drop.

MILLER

FIRES a burst. More Germans drop.

THE GERMANS KEEP COMING

Lots of them. Moving from cover to cover. FIRING.

MILLER

Manning the forward machine gun. Way out front. Sees that he's going to be cut off. He grabs the hot gun. The barrel burns into his flesh. He ignores the pain and RUNS BACK toward the bridge.

HE DIVES over the sandbags. Barely makes it. TRAILED BY BULLETS.

THE GERMANS

Take positions near the bridge. Moving in. FIRING. Overwhelming. They're everywhere.

THREE GERMANS

Break through the perimeter.

RYAN SHOOTS one. GRAPPLES with the other two.

REIBEN

Sees sees Ryan. Races over. SHOOTS one German. STABS the other.

RYAN FALLS BACK. Stunned, unhurt.

REIBEN only gives him a quick look. Gets to the MACHINE GUN.

OPENS UP against the Germans who are still coming. FIRES A LONG BURST. Germans drop.

MILLER

FIRES again. More Germans drop.

THE GERMANS

Take positions in the building near the bridge.

They start working their way to the tops of the nearby buildings.

Making their way along the riverbanks.

REIBEN AND RYAN

Forward. Reiben FIRING. Ryan feeding the ammo belt.

REIBEN
MORE AMMO!

UPHAM

Hears that. Doesn't hesitate. He grabs a pair of ammo boxes. RUNS toward Reiben and Ryan.

SEVERAL GERMANS ZERO UPHAM

OPEN UP on him.

BULLETS TRAIL UPHAM. He's outruning them. Almost there.

UPHAM

TAKES HALF-A-DOZEN SLUGS. Torn apart. Stumbles the final few steps to the machine gun nest. Falls on the sandbags, giving Reiben and Ryan the ammo. UPHAM'S DEAD.

RYAN STUNNED

For just a micro-second. No time. Grabs the ammo. REIBEN FIRING. Ryan clips the new ammo belt onto the tail of the one almost out.

REIBEN

Continues FIRING. CUTTING DOWN the advancing Germans.

THE GERMANS START TO FALL BACK

MILLER

Knows what that means. He hears the RUMBLE OF THE TANKS.

MILLER
TIGHTEN IT UP! HERE THEY COME!

RYAN AND REIBEN

Immediately grab the machine gun and ammo and race back to the rear nest.

Then RYAN AND MILLER converge at the eighty-eight.

THE FIRST TANK APPEARS

Huge. Terrifying. Clanking. Trailed by two German infantry platoons.

JACKSON

On the bridgekeeper's hut. Picking off German soldiers who follow the tank.

A GERMAN INFANTRYMAN SPOTS JACKSON. Hollars into the tanks voice-tube.

THE TANK

Stops. Grinds its gears. Turning it's turret toward bridgekeeper's hut.

MILLER
JACKSON!

JACKSON

Knows what's coming but he holds his position, continuing to pick off German soldiers.

THE TANK BLASTS

THE BRIDGEKEEPER'S HUT AND JACKSON

ARE OBLITERATED IN THE EXPLOSION.

MILLER AND RYAN

SEE JACKSON DIE. A bare moment to react. Then, they turn their attention back to the eighty-eight. Frantically turning the aiming cranks. Lowering the barrel to point blank.

TANK AGAINST EIGHTY-EIGHT.

Which can fire first.

MILLER AND RYAN

Win the race.

FIRE THE EIGHTY-EIGHT

BLAST THE LEAD TANK

DESTROY IT IN A SHOWER OF METAL AND FLAMES

MILLER AND RYAN

Quickly reload the eighty-eight. FIRE AGAIN.

DESTROY THE SECOND TANK.

MILLER

Shoves the FINAL SHELL into the breech of the eighty-eight. Pats Ryan on the back. Grabs a SATCHEL CHARGE.

RUNS down the bridge. Right toward the two advancing tanks.

RYAN

FIRES THE EIGHTY-EIGHT.

DESTROYING THE THIRD TANK.

MILLER

Races through the debris. Trailed by BULLETS.

REIBEN

With the machine gun. Covers Miller. Keeping most of the German infantry down.

RYAN jumps behind the second machine gun. Opens up. Helping to cover Miller.

THE LAST GERMAN TANK

Turret spins. Turning toward the fast approaching Miller. Ready to blow him to bits.

MILLER

Is almost there. He arms the satchel charge.

THE TIGER'S MACHINE GUNS OPENS UP ON HIM.

BLASTS A TRAIL OF BULLETS

MILLER

Throws the satchel charge under the tank. Rolls off the edge of the bridge. Lands on the embankment below.

THE LAST TIGER TANK EXPLODES

MILLER RYAN, REIBEN continue FIRING.

Almost out of ammo.

MILLER SCRAMBLING UP THE EMBANKMENT, back onto the bridge, hears something over the SOUNDS OF FIRING.

MILLER
HOLD IT! HOLD IT!

Ryan and Reiben cease firing. Now they hear it, too.

A RUMBLE, DEEPER AND MORE OMINOUS than any they've heard yet.

MILLER
Goddamn it!

REIBEN
More tanks...

RYAN
Lot's of them.

The fear on their faces turns to resignation. They know that they are dead men. They settle into their postions, and prepare to fire and die.

They wait. The RUMBLE GETS LOUDER AND LOUDER.

THEM MILLER'S FACE STARTS TO CHANGE...a hint...of a smile...then a real smile...

AN AMERICAN SHERMAN TANK APPEARS from over the rise. Then ANOTHER...AND ANOTHER...AND ANOTHER...

MILLER, REIBEN AND RYAN

Stand there, stunned, watching tank after tank appear, along with scores of heavily-armed American soldiers.

They keep coming and coming. American tanks, with wave after wave of U.S. infantrymen, looking for targets. They find a few among the departing Germans.

THE ADVANCING TROOPS

Run onto the bridge and start to secure the position. A SERGEANT and a few of HIS MEN look around, curiously eyeing Miller, Reiben and Ryan, battered and bloody, standing among the bodies.

A MAJOR strides up.

MAJOR
Report, Captain.

MILLER
Miller, Company B, Second Rangers,
that's Private Richard Reiben and
that's Private James Ryan,
Hundred-and-First Airborne.

The Sergeant and several other soldiers overhear.

SERGEANT
Ryan?

One of the soldiers speaks quietly to another.

SOLDIER
That's him, that's Ryan.

The Major puts his hand on Ryan's shoulder.

MAJOR
Command is looking for you, son.
You're going home.

Ryan looks up, tired. He nods.

EXT. RAMELLE BRIDGE HEAD - DAY

American tanks and hundreds of fresh troops stream down the road and over the bridge.

MILLER, RYAN AND REIBEN

Watch. In a small area, cleared of the debris, the bodies of Jackson, Upham, Sarge, Forrest and the other paratroopers are laid out, neatly, respectfully, covered.

Miller and Reiben stay protectively close to Ryan, as if they don't want to risk him being bumped into or run over by any of the advancing troops or vehicles.

MILLER

Walks to the bodies. He kneels down next to Sarge and looks at him for a long moment. Then, with a steady hand, he takes one of Sarge's two dog-tags. Then he does the same to Jackson and Upham.

REIBEN AND RYAN watch silently.

MILLER

Stands and walks back to Reiben and Ryan. He hands the dog-tags to Ryan who grips them tightly and nods in thanks.

Miller takes a last look at the bridge and the bodies, then he shoulders his gear.

MILLER
Let's move out.

Reiben and Ryan gather up their gear. They walk with Miller down the road, away from the bridge.

CAMERA CRANES UP

The three dirty, bloodied, tired men walk down the road, ignored by the fresh troops marching in the opposite direction.

RYAN
Captain?

MILLER
Yes, Private.

RYAN
Upham and Jackson, what were they like?

MILLER
Upham? Good kid, smart, he was writing a book.

RYAN
Yeah?

REIBEN
Yeah, and he was fast, too, ran the 220 in twenty-four-five.

RYAN
No kidding.

MILLER
Jackson was from West Fork, Tennessee, he was going to be a preacher, his father and uncles have a traveling ministry out of the back of a stretch Hudson.

RYAN
And Sarge?

MILLER
Sarge?
(beat)
He was the best friend I ever had.
(smiles)
Lemme tell you about Sarge...

They walk on, disappearing in the distance among the hundreds and hundreds of American soldiers who are marching down the road and over the bridge.

FADE OUT.

- THE END -